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Works

NICHOL'S SERIES OF STANDARD DIVINES.

PURITAN PERIOD.

With General Preface

BY JOHN C. MILLER, D.D.,

LINCOLN COLLEGE; HONORARY CANON OF WORCESTER; RECTOR OF GREENWICH.

THE

WORKS OF GEORGE SWINNOCK, M.A.

VOL. III.

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THE WORKS

OF

GEORGE SWINNOCK, M.A.

VOL. III.

CONTAINING:

THE LATTER PORTION OF THE CHRISTIAN MAN'S CALLING,
HEAVEN AND HELL EPITOMISED,
AND A PORTION OF THE FADING OF THE FLESH.

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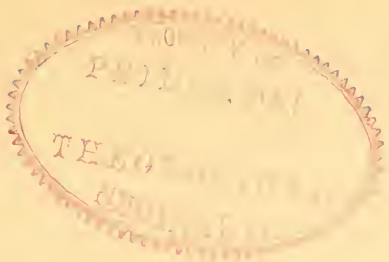

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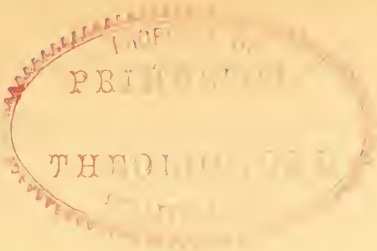
THE CHRISTIAN MAN'S CALLING.

PART III.—(*continued.*)



THE CHRISTIAN MAN'S CALLING.

PART III.

CHAPTER VII.

How a Christian may exercise himself to godliness in visiting the sick.

Fifthly, Thy duty is to exercise thyself in visiting the sick. The visitation of the sick is a work of as great weight as any enjoined us relating to others, and as much neglected and slighted in its management as almost any duty commanded. Sickness is so common, and death so ordinary, that with most their frequency takes away the sense of them, and charity in many sickens and dieth as fast as others' bodies. The generality of pretended Christians, like the priest and the Levite, if they see a man wounded, both in his body and soul, though it be to death, pass on the other side of the way, not caring to meddle with any that are in misery. They tell us they are true members of Christ, but, like a bag of suppurated blood, they feel nothing, neither have any communion with the body. Many on their dying beds, whose souls are worse and more dangerously sick than their bodies, may speak to their minister or neighbour (for the duty belongs to the people as well as the pastor) almost in the words of Martha to Christ, Sir, if thou hadst been here, my soul had not died. Some visit the sick, but rather out of a compliment than out of conscience, or to profit themselves more than their neighbours. The ingenious heathen Seneca, will tell such, If a man visit his sick friend, and watch at his pillow for charity's sake, and out of his old affection, we approve it; but if for a legacy, he is a vulture, and watcheth only for the carcase. The discourse of these is chiefly about worldly affairs,

and nothing about the great concernments of eternity. Others sometimes go about the work, but perform it so ill, administering cordials when there is need of corrosives, sewing pillows under their sick friends' heads, that they may die easily; or if they tell them of their danger, they do it so coldly and carelessly, and by halves, that, as he said, there is *plus periculi a medicamento quam morbo*, more danger from the physic than the disease; their soul-sickness is curable, but the unsuitable medicines they take make it incurable. It may be said of many a soul, as Adrian's counsellors said of him, *Multitudo medicorum*, &c., Many physicians have killed the emperor. Ah! how dreadful is it, when unskilful and unfaithful mountebanks undertake to tamper and trifle with immortal souls, that are just entering into their eternal estates; 'Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.' Galen saith, in respect of bodily medicines, *In medicina nihil exiguum*, There is nothing small in physic; everything in it is of great consequence; a little mistake may cause death. I may upon greater reason say, There is nothing little in spiritual physic; a small error in our prescriptions to sick souls, may cause dreadful mischief; instead of curing, we may kill the patient. Hazael's wet cloth was not more deadly to his master's body than the discourse of most is to their sick neighbours' souls. Fear of displeasing, and a natural propensity to flatter, prevail with too many to soothe their dying friends into unquenchable flames. But surely there is more love (as well as more faithfulness) in frighting a sick person out of his spiritual lethargy, than in fawning him into the eternal lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. Some venomous creatures tickle a man till he laughs, even when they sting him to death; so doth the flattering minister or neighbour—he raiseth a sick man, void of grace, to the pinnacle of joy, and highest hopes of heaven, and thereby throweth him down into the gulf of irrecoverable sorrows, and leaves him to undeceive himself in hell.

I shall first lay down two or three motives to stir up the reader to this work, and then direct him about it.

SECTION I.

First, It is a duty commanded thee by God. Men are apt to think the visitation of the sick to be only an act of courtesy and civility, which they may omit or perform at their pleasure, when it is an act of charity and Christianity, which every Christian is bound to by a divine precept. The ministers of Christ are

especially enjoined this task; but every member of Christ also, when God gives him opportunity, oweth this debt to his neighbour: James v. 14, 15, 'If any be sick, let him send for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him.' The same word which commandeth the sick man to send, commandeth the elder to go. Indeed, it is a gross fault in many sick persons (and therein they are exceedingly their own enemies) that they either send not at all for the minister, or if they do, not till they have done with the physician; when their bodies are past all hope, then they look after some hope for their souls. But without question, it is a duty for the elder sometimes to go uncalled. It is good manners to be an unbidden guest at a house of mourning. Our Master was found of them that asked not for him, and so should his servants. There are those that can invite themselves to their neighbours' tables, who withdraw themselves from their chambers. Some are drunk so often with their parishioners whilst they are in health, that they are afraid or ashamed to discourse seriously with them when they are sick. God may speak to many, as to the shepherds of Israel, Woe be to the shepherds of England, that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flock? 'Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed; but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them,' Ezek. xxxiv. 3, 4. None are more cruel to the flock than those that are most covetous of the fleece.

Oleaster, on Lev. xiv. 44,—'Then the priest shall come and look, and, behold, if the plague be spread,' &c., (that being the third time the priest was to visit the infected house,)—hath this useful observation, *Si sacerdos toties invisit leprosam domum, cur tu non ægrum?* If the priest were commanded so often to visit the leprous house, why dost not thou visit the sick person? The plague in the heart calls for more pity and help than the plague in the house.

This duty also belongs to private members, as well as to public officers. Every Christian should love his neighbour as himself, which he cannot do unless he have a sense of his sickness, and endeavour to improve such an opportunity for his neighbour's salvation. True love, like fire, burns hottest when the weather is coldest. Histories make mention of one Ursinus, a physician, that being to die for the gospel, and beginning to waver, Vitalis, a godly man, stepped to him, and, though he knew it would cost

him his life, encouraged him, saying, What! have you been so industrious heretofore, to preserve men's bodies, and will you now shrink at the saving your own soul? Be courageous! For which faithful counsel he was condemned, and suffered accordingly. It is our duty to assist them that die natural, as well as those that die violent deaths. To visit persons in their affliction, is one testimony of the truth of our religion at this day. Holiness and charity are like father and child. 'Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and the widows in their afflictions,' &c., James i. 27. The fatherless and widows are expressed, (but the sick, and strangers, and captives are included,) because these are usually most afflicted and most neglected. Those that have received mercy, cannot but shew mercy. As visiting the distressed is a sign of it now, so it will be the test of Christianity at the great day. Mat. xxv. 34-36, 'Come ye blessed, &c. I was hungry, and ye fed me; naked, and ye clothed me; sick, and ye visited me,' &c. Works of mercy fill up the whole bill, as the evidence of the saints' right to heaven. Whereof Luther gives this reason: because the consciences of the wicked shall justify Christ as well in the absolution of the godly, as in their own condemnation. Though Christians do not give their alms, or visit the sick, to be seen of men, yet in doing many offices of love, and acts of charity, they are seen of men. So they who can witness the truth of Christians' mercy, will be forced to acknowledge the equity of Christ's sentence.

SECTION II.

Secondly, It is a special opportunity of doing and receiving good.

1. Of doing good. I think it the more necessary to speak to this motive, because many are apt to judge all pains with sick persons to be to no purpose. They are discouraged from endeavouring the conversion of profane men upon sick-beds, supposing that such men's repentance will be as unsound as their bodies, even when they are sick unto death. Though I would not give the least encouragement to any men to defer their turning to God, believing him worse than mad who puts off the weighty business of his soul, because peradventure God may grant him repentance hereafter; yet I must obviate this suggestion of the devil, which hinders men from doing their duty—God may shew mercy to a soul at last. There is one example in Scripture, that

none might despair. Sickness is with some men the tide-time of devotion. They who scorned godly men, and made a mock of godliness in their health, will prize the saint, and desire his sanctity above all the world, when they lie upon sick-beds, and consider what a holy God they are going to appear before. Sickness, as one saith, is, *Officina virtutis, morum disciplina*, The shop of virtue, and the school of manners. Therefore king Alfred was wont to say, I ever find myself best when worst; best in soul when worst in body: the sickness of my body is physic to my soul. Experience daily informeth us that the swaggerers and gallants of the world (whose consciences are not seared with a hot iron) though they gave themselves up to drunkenness, and gluttony, and gaming, and whoredom, and all manner of wickedness in their youth and strength, yet when they are weakened much with a disease, and have no hopes of continuing longer on earth, begin to wish that they had spent their time to more purpose, and are sensible of their neglect of God and Christ, and their souls, and eternity; then many of them will desire the company of those that fear God, and beg their prayers, and hearken to their counsels, and would give all they are worth for a little of their grace and holiness. Even Benhadad, the king of Syria, an enemy to the prophets and people of God in his health, will send a prince to Elisha with a large present, and most submissive expressions—'Thy son Benhadad'—in his sickness, 2 Kings viii. 9. Sickness gives men a double advantage for holiness.

(1.) It takes off their hearts from creatures, by teaching them experimentally what a poor, weak cordial the whole creation is to sick or dying men. When men are strong and lusty, they can taste and savour earthly things; carnal comforts hinder their endeavours after spiritual. They take up with creatures, as Esau, and say, they have enough; but sickness makes them know the emptiness of all sublunary things. When men are sick, they cannot relish the world's dainties and delicates. The preferments, and riches, and pleasures of the earth, are all unsavoury and uncomfortable to them. They now see the vanity of those things which heretofore they so much idolised; how unable they are to revive their fainting spirits, or to allay their pain, or purchase them the least ease, or procure them the least acceptance in the other world; and hence the price of the world's market falls abundantly in their judgments. Bernard tells us of a brother of his, that when he gave him many good instructions, and he being a soldier, regarded them not, he put his finger to his side, and told

his brother, One day a spear shall make way to this heart of thine, for admonition and instruction to enter.

(2.) In sickness conscience is usually allowed more liberty to speak its mind, and men are then more at leisure to hear it. In health, their callings, or friends, or lusts, or sports, or some carnal comfort or other, take up their hearts and time; that conscience must be silenced, as too bold a preacher, for offering to disturb them in their pleasures, or if it will use its authority, and continue to speak in God's name, and forbid their foolishness, and atheism, and sensuality, and profaneness, they are deaf to its calls and commands, and drown its voice with the noise of their brutish delights. But in sickness they are taken off from their trades, and pastimes, and merry meetings, and jovial companions; when their bodies are weak, their fleshly lusts are not so strong as formerly, whereby conscience hath a greater opportunity to tell them of their miscarriages and wickedness, and they themselves are more attentive to its words and warning.

Reader, it is a special piece of wisdom to improve such a season for the good of thy neighbour's soul. When the wax is softened, then we clap the seal upon it, lest it harden again, and be incapable of any impression. When the hand of God hath by sickness made the heart of thy wicked friend or brother soft and tender, then do thy utmost to stamp the image of God upon it. Paul would preach whilst a door was opened, and there was likelihood of doing good. It is a great encouragement to work, when the subject upon which we bestow our pains seems capable of what we prosecute, and probable to answer our labour. We have some heart to strike a nail into a board, because there is hope it will enter; but no list to drive a nail into a flint, because we despair of effecting it. The smith strikes when the iron is hot; he knoweth, if he should stay till it is cold, his labour would be in vain. Friend, take the advantage of others' bodily sickness to further their spiritual health, lest they either die in their sins, or harden upon their recovery. Opportunity is like a joint in some part of a fowl, which, if we hit upon, we may easily carve and divide the fowl; but if the knife fall on this side or that side of the joint, we do but mangle the meat, and take pains to no purpose. It is the speech of Master Richard Rogers in his Seven Treatises, I have visited some persons that have been condemned to die, in whom, (through the blessing of God upon his endeavours,) I have found as good signs of saved persons as of any that died in their beds, not having tasted of repentance before.

2. It is a special opportunity of receiving good. We are taught more effectually by the eye than by the ear. The sight of a sick or dying person hath often a strange and a strong operation upon the beholder. When the father heard of one that sinned notoriously, he cried out, I may be as bad as this man is. When thou seest one dangerously sick, thou mayest think with thyself, I must be as this man is, sick unto death, when none of my relations or possessions can afford me the least comfort; and oh how much doth it concern me to prepare beforehand for such an hour! If this man's work be now to do, when his life is ending, how sad is the condition of his precious soul! Oh that I were wise to consider timely, and to provide seasonably for my latter end! The sight of a dead man was instrumental to the spiritual life of Waldus. The sight of others' sickness may well quicken me to the greater industry and diligence after spiritual health. Do I behold my neighbour, whose sail formerly swelled with a full gale of worldly enjoyments, now wind-bound, chained to his chamber, or fettered to his bed, unable to relish his food, or take any comfort in his friends? do I see him full of aches and pains, tossings and tumblings, crying out in the evening, Would God it were morning, and in the morning, would God it were evening, because of the anguish of his spirit? do I behold his cheeks pale, his eyes sunk, his lips quivering, his loins trembling, his heart panting, and nature striving and struggling with the disease to keep its ground, and yet at last forced to quit the field, and leave the victory to its adversary? how many excellent observations may I draw from such a text! What a fool am I to trust the world, which leaves this man in his greatest want! How mad am I in loving sin, which is the cause of all these crosses and miseries, and which makes death so mortal to poor souls! Of how much worth and value is the blessed Redeemer, who will comfort a Christian in such a time of need, and carry him through his last conflict with joy and conquest! How careful should I be to get and keep a good conscience, which in such a day of extremity will yield me true courage and confidence! The wise man doth not without cause tell us: 'It is better to go into the house of mourning, (to the terming or charnel-house,) than to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to heart,' Eccles. vii. 2. Men in a house of feasting are apt to be forgetful of their duty to God, themselves, and their neighbours, Isa. xxii. 13, 14; Amos vi. 3, 6; Isa. v. 11, 12. When the body is filled, the soul is often neglected. Job was afraid of this in his sons: Job i. 6, 'It may be my sons

have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts,'—*i.e.*, when they had been feasting at their elder brother's house. God gives Israel a special caution against this, Deut. viii. 12, 14. Men, in a house of mourning, are put in mind both of God's sovereignty, who draweth away their breath and they perish, Ps. civ. 29, and their own frailty, how soon they are gathered and withered, even in their prime and pride, Ps. xxxix. 5. I am blind if I do not see mine own end in the end of another; and distracted if I do not provide for my last enemy, which I must necessarily encounter. Thus it is a mercy to ourselves, to be merciful unto others; and whilst we visit the sick, we visit our own souls. Who would not do his neighbour good, when he may be confident it will tend to his own gain? I have but hopes by my visit of advantaging a sinner; but I may be sure, if I be faithful therein, of profiting myself.

SECTION III.

Thirdly, It may be the last opportunity thou mayest ever have of advantaging thy sick neighbour's soul. His sick-bed may be his death-bed, and then it will be too late to counsel or advise him. There is no purgatory in the other world. Diseases, both bodily and spiritual, must be purged away before death, or never. He that is filthy at death, must be filthy still, even to all eternity. All the tears in hell will not wash out the least spot in the soul; all the fire of hell will not purge out the least dross. Therefore Christ took the opportunity of dropping good counsel into the heart of the thief on the cross, knowing that if he had omitted it a very few hours longer, the soul of the poor thief had been lost for ever. Hadst thou a friend going to sea, and never to return again, waiting at a port for a wind, and then to be gone, and hadst business with him of as great concernment to him as his life—thou couldst tell him of a quicksand which he must beware of, or he will be cast away—wouldst thou not be quick and speedy to acquaint him with it, lest he should be under sail before thou didst see him? Would it not cut thee to the heart, if he should miscarry through thy negligence? The application is easy. The soul of every neighbour is, or ought to be, dearer to thee than the body of thy nearest friend or relation. When thy wicked neighbour is sick, his soul is launching, for aught thou knowest, into the ocean of eternity, whence he shall never, never, return more. He waits only for a wind, a word from God, and he is gone. The sick-bed is the passage or pathway to the grave. Thou hast work to do with him,

that is more worth to him than his life, that is of as great value as his immortal soul, and eternal salvation. Now thou mayest acquaint him, while he is on the shore, with his danger, and the way of his delivery; but if once he launch into the main, thou mayest call loud and long enough after him in vain. Oh, will it not pierce thee to the quick, if his soul should be swallowed up in the boundless and bottomless sea of divine wrath, through thy laziness or unfaithfulness? When the day drew near for the destruction of the Jews, the heart of Haman swelled with hopes, and Esther had then an opportunity to step in and preserve the lives of her countrymen. Mordecai tells her, 'Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?' She made use of the season, and saved their lives with the hazard of her own. Had she delayed a little longer, it had been too late; they had all been sacrificed upon the altar of Haman's ambition. When the hour of a wicked man's death approacheth, the heart of the roaring lion is big with expectation of his prey, and a Christian friend hath then possibly an opportunity to save the poor creature's soul. Now or never; there is no knowledge nor wisdom in the grave, whither the sick person is going. If he make use of the price God puts now into his hands, by serious, prudent, faithful, and affectionate counsel, he may help the sinner to heaven. Who knoweth whether he be come, by the providence of God, into the sick man's chamber for such a thing as this?

I have but one thing more to commend to thee, and then I shall speak to the work itself.

Before thou goest to thy sick neighbour, go to God by prayer; entreat him to direct thee what to speak, and to succeed what shall be spoken; it is his own ordinance, and therefore thou mayest the more comfortably beg and expect his assistance. Nehemiah would speak to God before he spake to the king for the afflicted Jews; Esther prefers her petition, first to her Maker, that her prayer might prosper, and then her petition to her husband for the lives of her countrymen. God is the principal agent; and if he be left out, all thy labour will be lost.

Wherein the exercising thyself to godliness in visiting the sick consisteth—

1. In endeavouring to benefit the soul of thy neighbour.
2. In getting some spiritual profit to thyself.

First, In endeavouring the spiritual good of thy neighbour. We are enjoined, in the eighth command, to mind and further our neighbour's temporal wealth, but much more his spiritual welfare. It

was true which Bucer's physician told him, when he expressed his eagerness to die, *Non sibi, sed multorum utilitati, se esse natum*, That he was not born for himself, but for the good of many others; every saint is to be, as it were, a common stock for the profit of many. He is born, and new born, not only for himself, but for others' benefit. The lynx is a spotted, unclean beast, that, knowing how his urine will congeal into a precious stone, and be profitable to men, maketh a hole in the ground when he pisseth, to hide it from them. Job, who knew the advantage that might accrue to others thereby, would not conceal either the word or works of God from them, Job vi. 10, and xxvii. 11. To this end—

1. Labour to be acquainted with the state of the sick person's soul. It is dangerous to give either purges or cordials ignorantly, or at peradventure. The souls of men are of unconceivable value, and therefore not to be tampered or trifled with. It is a good step to the cure to understand fully the disease, and the constitution of the patient; therefore physicians feel the pulse, view the urine, inquire of the sick person, or his friends, concerning his former course of life, diet, present digestion of his food, place of his trouble or pain, &c., that they may proceed upon good grounds, and give suitable and effectual advice. So shouldst thou, reader, in visiting the sick, inform thyself, either by conference with some serious Christians of their acquaintance beforehand, or by some searching, prudent questions to the sick, concerning the condition of their souls. The ignorance of a physician may occasion the death of the patient. Some practitioners in physic, who intend much good, do much hurt for want of judgment to find out the tempers and distempers of the sick. A mistake in soul-cases is of more hazard than in body-sickness. If I undertake to humble a person who is already cast down sufficiently, and wants a cordial, or to comfort one who is full of presumption already, and needs a corrosive, how good soever my meaning may be, my acting is evil; and instead of relieving, I may destroy my brother. The eastern churches did not without cause enjoin the minister, or such as were appointed to visit the sick, to continue with them seven days together, that in that space they might discover the man before they applied themselves to him, either in a way of admonition, or counsel, or consolation. Job's friends, when they came to visit him, spake not a word, either reproving or advising him, till they heard him open his mouth and curse the tongue that told the news of his birth. The knowledge of the sick man's spiritual condition is, as it were, the foundation upon which we must build all our discourse with him, and prayers

to God for him; or at least it is the rule by which we must build, and therefore it is very dangerous to mistake in it. If the foundation be laid ill, the superstructure will never stand well; if the rule be crooked, the building cannot be straight. A blind archer may as soon hit the mark, as one ignorant of his neighbour's state advantage his soul.

SECTION IV.

2. Apply thyself to him suitably to his condition. As the conditions of men are several, so must the application be; that which cures one may kill another. One medicine will as soon cure all diseased bodies, as one way all sick souls; indeed the physic to be prescribed every patient is the same for substance—the blood of Christ; 'by his stripes we are healed.' But there are several ways of tendering this to sinners, that they may be prepared for it, and give it all acceptation; that physic which is given to one in a potion, is given to another in a powder, to a third in an electuary, to a fourth in a pill, according as it will be most profitable and most acceptable to them. It is not easy so to write the bill, that the sick may receive what is prescribed to his greatest content and advantage; for as many perish *errore medici* as *vi morbi*, by the error of the physician, as by the power of the disease. Though I judge it next to impossible for me to set down, exactly and fully, directions answerable to the difference of sick persons' condition, disposition, education, calling, guilt, &c., yet I shall speak to the most ordinary cases, and be careful not to omit the main work, namely, that which concerneth the conversion of graceless and Christless persons, if, on a sick-bed, God peradventure will give them repentance.

If the sick person be judged carnal and unregenerate, (for the tree is known by its fruits; besides, it is no breach of charity to fear the worst of them whose lives do not speak a positive holiness, especially whilst we are endeavouring their good,) then in general I would advise thee to speak,

(1.) To the depravation of man's nature, and the trangressions of life, with the sad aggravations thereof; how holy man was by creation, how universally and desperately vicious he is by his fall from God, and what horrid unthankfulness he is guilty of in continuing in sin, notwithstanding the grace that is offered to him in the gospel. It is fit to speak to the purity and equity of the law of God, and to the difference and contrariety of his heart and life

to it; to the sinfulness of sin, in its offensiveness and opposition to the nature and word of an infinitely holy, glorious, and gracious Majesty; in its destructiveness to the present peace and future perfection of his own precious and immortal soul; and in that the stain of it is so deep, and the venom of it so great, that nothing beneath the blood of God could wash out its spots, or be a sufficient antidote for its poison. Tell him of the folly of sinners in refusing heaven for earth, angelical delights for brutish pleasures, the blessed God for a base lust; and of his own madness likewise in running on so eagerly upon his own ruin, against the counsels of men, the commands, threatenings, and entreaties of God, the convictions of his conscience, the calls and invitations of a loving Redeemer, and the motions of the Holy Spirit.

(2.) Speak to the merit of sin, how it being committed against an infinite Majesty, deserveth infinite wrath and severity. Tell him that the wages of sin is death, temporal, spiritual, eternal. Acquaint him with the justice, holiness, and jealousy of God; how he will by no means clear the guilty, but hath threatened all manner of plagues and judgments on the workers of iniquity, and cannot fail in the least of accomplishing his word; how he is resolved to make all the children of men feel sin to be an evil and bitter thing, either in broken bones on earth, or broken backs, and endless torments in hell. Let him know his own obnoxiousness, by reason of his many and grievous sins, to the curse of the law, the wrath of the Lord, and the vengeance of the eternal fire. Tell him that he is by nature a child of wrath, an enemy to God, and an heir of hell; that it had been just to have cast him out of the womb into hell; that God's patience in bearing with him thus long, will but increase his condemnation and endless misery, unless he prevent it by sincere conversion.

This is the first thing requisite in order to the recovery of his soul. Till sin be discovered in its heinous nature, and bloody colours, it will never be lamented, nor the Saviour esteemed according to the duty of the sinner. The first thing usually which the Spirit doth in the change of a sinner, is to convince him of sin, John xvi. 8; and this is also first in the minister's commission, Acts xxvi. 18. The great neglect of this, in ministers and others, is one reason that so few sinners are awakened; the needful work of humiliation is so dangerously slighted, that poor souls go sleeping and dreaming all is well, till they come to be undeceived in hell.

(3.) Speak to his own inability to help himself, that no less than infinite power can recover him out of his miserable condition. Men

are prone to act like brutes, when they are wounded, to undertake the licking themselves whole, as if it were an easy thing to renew a carnal creature, and heal vitiated nature; but, alas! the work is not so soon done. It is another manner of work to open the blind eyes, and enliven the dead soul, than the secure careless worldling doth imagine. It is called a resurrection from the dead, a new creation, the work of God, because nothing less than a divine almighty power can effect it, Rev. xx. 6; Eph. ii. 10; John vi. 29; Eph. ii. 6.

(4.) Speak to the necessity of a change in him, both of his disposition by repentance, and of his condition by faith in Jesus Christ. That these are not works which may be done, or left undone, but such as must be done, or he is undone for ever. Tell him the necessity of a change,

[1.] Of his nature, by repentance; how God himself hath said, Except he repent he shall perish, and that it is not possible for the whole creation to make void God's word. That, as he is a corrupted, depraved creature, he is no way capable of heaven, for God hath shut him out, and barred the gate of bliss against him: 'Into it (*i.e.*, heaven) can in no wise enter anything that defileth, or is unclean,' Rev. xxi. 27; and he hath shut himself out by his vicious nature, for spiritual pleasures are not suitable, neither can be enjoyed by depraved and ungodly creatures. Let him know that swinish dispositions cannot relish heavenly delights, and therefore, if it were possible for him to get to heaven in a carnal estate, heaven would be no heaven, that is, no place of joy or pleasure to him. Acquaint him especially wherein the nature of repentance consisteth, not in a few sighs or sobs for sin, or in crying God mercy, or saying, I am sorry I ever sinned, but in a real change of the heart and nature; that his mind must be changed to see the ugliness and deformity of sin, his will to refuse it as the greatest evil, his affections to loathe it and hate it above all things whatsoever; that he must abhor himself, and loathe himself, and bemoan himself, for all his abominations, if ever he would find mercy, Job xlii. 3; Jer. xxxi. 18; Ezek. xlvii.; that he must in his whole man be altered, turned upside down, be contrary to what he is by nature, be converted and born again, or he can never see the kingdom of God, Mat. xviii. 3; John iii. 3. Forget not also to discover the necessity of a change,

[2.] Of his state, by faith in Jesus Christ; how the Son of God can alone deliver him from the wrath of God; that there is no name under heaven by which he can be saved, but the name of Christ;

that all his prayers, and tears, and duties, cannot satisfy the divine justice for the least of his sins, or deserve the least favour on the behalf of his soul; that he must of necessity be united by faith to Christ, and submit to his guidance, and give up himself to his government, or perish eternally; that though Christ died for him without his will, yet he will not save him against or without his will, but he must be heartily willing to accept Christ as his Saviour and sovereign, as ever he looks for salvation by him. Here it may not be amiss to acquaint him with the fulness of Christ's merits, and the freeness of God's mercy to them that do sincerely repent and believe. How God commands, entreats, threatens, promiseth, and all to draw men to mind the things of their peace.

(5.) Speak to the shortness of his time to do this weighty and necessary work in; that now there is no dallying, no delaying, for within a few hours it may be too late; that grace must be got now or never; that Christ, and pardon, and life must be obtained now or never; that no sin shall be forgiven, no person shall be justified, no soul renewed or cleansed in the other world, that is not pardoned and sanctified in this; that heaven and hell are before him, and within a short time the matter will be determined which of the two he shall be in for ever; that he must now get a title to bliss, or miss it for ever; now prevent the unquenchable fire, or burn in it for ever; that he is now upon the shore, just stepping into the ocean either of honey or wormwood, joy or horror, and therefore it concerns him nearly to consider what he doth, and to be diligent to the utmost, if he would escape the endless company and torments of devils and damned spirits. Take heed of giving him hopes of recovery, which many do to please the sick or their friends; for hereby thou mayest exceedingly injure his soul, frustrating all the means used for his spiritual health. Think not much to be often with the sick person in case thou hast opportunity. Let his misery move thee, and the love of Christ draw thee. When we fell an oak, thirty or forty of the first strokes seem to be lost, because the tree stirs not; yet if we continue, it comes at last down, and sheweth the effects of the first as well as the last strokes. If he be converted thou wilt be satisfied; however, thy reward is with God. If this unconverted person be scandalous, then it may be sometimes convenient to hint at the horrid nature of such sins, being committed against common light, and abhorred by many of the very heathen, and marked particularly for vengeance by the jealous God, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10; Gal. v. 19–21; Eph. v. 5, 6. Thou mayest have the more hopes of success in visiting such a one, because conscience in

this sinner will probably prove thy friend, and join with thee in terrifying him for those sins from which it could not (though it frequently attempted) dissuade him.

If the unconverted person be one that lived civilly and orderly in his outward conversation—paying every man his own, keeping his church, forbearing enormous crimes, &c.—it will be then needful to commend his civility; Jesus looked on such a man and loved him. But also to discover its defects and insufficiency, that there is one thing lacking; how his nature is universally polluted, and it must be thoroughly purified, or he is a lost man; that it is one thing to have a wound hid, and another thing to have it healed; that many infidels have been unblameable in their outward carriages, who yet perished, being without Christ; that the scribes and pharisees went farther than most civil men, for they had not only a negative holiness in denying gross sins, but a positive holiness, (in show at least,) they prayed, fasted, &c.; yet he, to whom it is impossible to lie, tells us, Mat. v. 20, 'Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven.' It will be good also, in dealing with such a person, to insist much upon the latitude and purity of the law of God; how it forbiddeth (and condemneth for) the least sinful thought, and how nothing less than perfect obedience can answer its demands, or satisfy the law-giver; because such men are apt to judge themselves righteous, comparing themselves with those that are notoriously vicious. They think all is well, their minds being darkened, and unable to discern and discover the secret lusts which are hugged in their hearts; besides, their consciences being defiled as well as other faculties, are not so true to them as to convince them powerfully of that pride, hypocrisy, unbelief, impenitency, atheism, and ungodliness which they are guilty of. And Satan hath a strict watch over them to keep them asleep in sin, not caring, so men go to hell, whether they go thither in the dirty road of scandalous and crying crimes, or in the cleanly path, and through the fair meadows of civility. Whether the person be scandalous or civil, it will be needful to let in light at some crevice, and not to leave the sinner wholly in the darkness of despair. The good Samaritan poured oil as well as wine into the wounds of him that fell among thieves. A little hope may melt that heart which despair would harden. Sturdy thieves have wept at the news of a reprieve, that have stormed and raged at the sentence of condemnation; but this is wisely to be done, lest the sinner be encouraged to presume. Lenity is to be joined with severity. Let there be love,

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but not emboldening them to sloth; let there be terror, but not driving them into a fury, saith Gregory.[1]

If the sick person be one that is judged a true member of Christ, then speak to the excellency of grace, and Christ, and heaven; to the certainty and worth of those promises that are entailed on believers, to make his passage into the other world as comfortable as thou canst. It will be fit also to speak to those graces of faith, patience, love, heavenly-mindedness, and joy in God, which should be minded and exercised in a time of sickness; how the time of affliction is the spring, the special time wherein those graces should shoot up and shew themselves; that God expecteth some service from him under his sickness; and that his last works should be better than his first. If he be under doubts and fears—for Satan will take the advantage of his sickness to assault him with his fiery darts, and saints are too apt to question God's love when they feel his hand, the weakness of the body discomposing the mind, and denying it the free exercise of spiritual judgment—then advise him to review his former experiences of divine goodness, and trials of divine grace within him; to hold fast on Jesus Christ, and to consider that sickness is common to men, good as well as bad; that though they differ vastly in the other world, yet not at all in their passage thither. Singular saints have been afflicted with the sorest sickness; Job was a non-such for sanctity, yet full of sores. It is a question whether he were more eminent for corporal distempers or spiritual health; Hezekiah, David, Asa, Paul, Epaphroditus, were all thus chastened of the Lord, but not condemned with the world.

Whatsoever the sick person be, whether gracious or graceless, it will not be amiss to mention the three great lessons which God would teach every one by affliction.

First, The emptiness of the world, appearing in its inability to afford the least ease to the body, or comfort to the soul, of the sick. How little worth is that which fails a man in his greatest need!

Second, The preciousness of Christ, and grace, and the promises of the gospel, which can enliven and encourage a dying person; that can cause light in darkness, joy in sorrow, and life in death; that can enable a Christian to rejoice in tribulation, and to welcome pain and sickness, nay, and the very king of terrors, and to look into the other world with comfort and confidence.

Third, The sinfulness of sin, which is the original of all diseases,

[1] Miscenda est lenitas cum severitate; sit amor, sed non emolliens; sit rigor, sed non exasperans.—*Greg. Mor.*, 10.

and aches, and grief, and separation of friends, and losses, and miseries whatsoever. The rabbis say, that when Adam tasted the forbidden fruit his head ached. It is clear sin is the original of sickness. The body is the instrument of unrighteousness, therefore the subject of diseases; 'for this cause many are weak and sick,' 1 Cor. xi. 30. All the evil in this and the other world are the issue and offspring of sin. Ah! what a root of bitterness is that, which brings forth such bitter fruit! Be sure to take the thoughts of the sick off from resting in physicians, or any means used for their cure; this was the fault of good Asa, 2 Chron. xvi. 12. Let them know that it is God that wounds, and he only that can heal, and therefore he must not be tempted, either by despising those helps which his providence giveth, or by relying on them. Hippocrates gave this counsel to all physicians, that when they went upon any occasion to visit their patients, they should consider, first of all, whether there was not *divinum aliquod in morbo*, something of God in the disease. If so, he held the patient to be desperate, and his recovery impossible: *Cujus contrarium verum est.* If it were the hand of God that smote them, the same hand can help them, for with him nothing is impossible. Let them understand that sickness hath a supernatural as well as a natural cause. That all diseases are, like the centurion's servants, at the command of God: He saith to one, Go, and it goeth; to another, Come, and it cometh; to a third, Do this, and it doeth it. God would have the Israelites know that not only sword, and famine, and captivity, but also pestilence, consumptions, fevers, and burning agues, are sent from heaven, Deut. xxviii. 21, 22. He causeth those storms, and tempests, and quarrels, and contentions that are between the humours in our bodies, to their disturbance and destruction. Therefore Moses, beholding the whole body of the Jews (except two renowned members) corrupted—for he lived to see all that came out of Egypt besides to die—cried out, 'Thou turnest man to destruction, and sayest, Return, ye children of men.'

SECTION V.

3. Deal closely and faithfully with him; let not fear of giving distaste, or hope of some advantage to thyself, make thee false to the soul of the sick. Do not play the part of a mountebank, in using palliating medicines to allay the distemper, or anodynes to stupefy the patient, and neglect the root of the malady. Alas! carnal wretches are prone enough of themselves to deceive and

flatter their own souls, till it be too late for second thoughts, and the wicked one will be at their bed-sides, to hinder, if it be possible, all means from awakening and undeceiving them. Be careful, therefore, lest thou shouldst be any way accessory to Satan's design. Sin is like the little serpent aspis, which stings men, whereby they fall into a pleasant sleep, and in that sleep die. Sinners need all the rousing and affrighting considerations that may be. He that gives a potion, which, instead of furthering health, procureth death, is a murderer. The flatterer is like the worm *teredo*, mentioned by Pliny, (in Nat. Hist.,) as soft as silk in the feeling of the hand, but it biteth so hard with the teeth, that it eateth out the heart of the strongest timber. Flattery is to sin, what oil to fire; it makes it flame the more. Oh it is dangerous to speak peace where God speaks war! shouldst thou do so, the blood of such a soul would be required at thy hands, Ezek. xxxiii. 8; Jer. xxiii. Faithful dealing will bring thee in most comfort at present, and most credit hereafter, as also be most advantageous to the sick person. When the great day comes, the man that hated flattery, and scorned, for a little profit or favour, to disown his duty, or prove false to the soul of his neighbour, will hold up his head with courage, but the cowardly and fearful will hang down their heads with shame, Rev. xxi. 8.

4. Pray with him, and for him. Sick persons are often full of pain and grief, and are more than usually assaulted by Satan, whereby they are the less able to pray for themselves, and have the more need of the prayers of others. It is observable that though the Holy Ghost commandeth men in other afflictions to pray themselves—'Is any afflicted? let him pray'—yet when he mentioneth sickness, he saith not, Is any sick? let him pray; but, 'Is any sick? let him send for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him,' James v. 14—*i.e.*, A sick man is not so fit to pray himself; he wanteth others to pray for him, and with him. The soul sympathiseth in the sufferings of the body, and the inner man is seldom at rest, if the outward man be distempered and disquieted. The mind is unfitted for duties by the diseases of the flesh. Paul calls his bodily weaknesses a temptation, Gal. iv. 13, 14. Afflictions on the flesh are temptations to the spirit, and sickness is a piercing arrow in Satan's quiver of temptations.

If the person be carnal, what motives hast thou, from his misery, to quicken thee to the duty! The poor creature is going to hell, and knoweth it not. His destruction is near, and he is not aware. How should the thoughts of that extremity and eternity of torments

which he is every moment liable to, stir thee up to be earnest and instant with God on his behalf! It may be thou wouldst sit up a whole night to watch with him for the comfort of his body; dost thou not know that the soul is infinitely more worth? Oh watch and pray, that he enter not into eternal condemnation! Thou art not ignorant that God hath made promises of grace, as well as promises to grace, and canst not tell but that grace waiteth in heaven for the sick person, only thy prayer must be the messenger to fetch it thence. God hath shewn mercy at the last; he can do it to this man, therefore thou mayest have the more hopes. Besides, it may be his sickness shall not be unto death, but only to heal his diseased soul, and so to give him a new life, both natural and spiritual. The question before thee is, whether that poor sick creature's soul shall be Christ's or the devil's for ever; and wilt thou not plead hard with God that it may be thrown in to Christ, whose title is unquestionable, and that the grand and arch-enemy of Christ and men may be frustrated and disappointed in his expectation? Zeal to the advancement of thy Redeemer's interest, and love to the soul of thy neighbour, should actuate and animate thy requests, and put life and fervency into thy petitions.

If the sick man be godly, thou hast the more encouragement to pray. God hath promised as much to him as thou canst rationally desire for him. He hath hopes to speed, that goeth to an honest, able man, and sheweth him his bond for what he demands. God is infinite, both in righteousness and power, so that there is no fear of a repulse, if you can shew his hand for your request. He delights to hear his promises pleaded in prayer, and to see his children so full of affection, as to be fervent in their petitions for each other. Thou mayest send the same message by prayer to Jesus, that the sister of Lazarus did, 'Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick,' and mayest be confident of the like gracious answer: 'This sickness is not unto death (eternal) but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.'

Next to thy endeavours for the good of thy sick neighbour's spiritual estate, it will be fit to advise him about his temporal estate, that he may dispose of his worldly affairs, and his wealth, if God have given him any, with wisdom, and settle things so firmly, that his relations may not be wrangling for his goods, when his body is at rest in his grave.

Secondly, The exercising ourselves to godliness in visiting the sick, consisteth in getting good to our own souls by it. Though it be forbidden us to inquire of the dead, and ask their counsel, yet it

is commanded us to inquire of the dying, and to learn of them, Deut. xviii. 11; Eccles. v. 1, 2. Sick men may teach them that are in health many excellent lessons. Some say that ground covered with ashes, is made thereby the more fruitful. The dust of the dead, falling upon a right soil, an honest heart, will make it the more abundant in holiness. A Christian findeth walking in hospitals or churchyards, among the sick or dying, much conducing to the health and life of his soul. He that was cast dead into his grave, by touching the bones of dead Elisha, was ravished to life. That which Elias said to Elisha, when he begged a double portion of his spirit, 'If thou seest me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee,' may fitly be alluded to in this place. The sight of others' sickness and death, and their departures from us, is a great means to increase the spirit in us, and to double our care and diligence in preparing for such an hour.

1. In laying to heart thine own frailty. He is but a cold clod of clay, and dead already, who doth not see his own death in the death of others. Sickness is but one remove from death; the sick-bed is the way to the coffin; therefore, when thou visitest the sick or dying, reflect upon thyself, and consider: This will be my case, or a worse, a violent stroke. The same enemy that encountered my neighbour, is upon his march towards me, and will certainly overtake me. The feet of them that carry my friend to his grave, are ready to carry me also; what need have I to be always in a dying frame, and ready for death! The very next arrow that death shoots, may be levelled at me; and shall not I stand always upon my guard in expectation of it, and armed for it! Oh how deep will the head of that arrow pierce me, if it find me naked.

2. In considering God's mercy to thee, and blessing him for the health thou enjoyest. The pain of others will tell thee that ease is a mercy; the racking sickness, and restless nights of others, do speak aloud in thine ears, that health and rest are mercies.[1] Oh how shouldst thou adore that God who distinguisheth thee thus graciously from others. Mayest thou not think with thyself, here is a person full of pain, the day is full of darkness to him, and wearisome nights are appointed to him. Lo, his wife, and children, and friends are weeping about him, but cannot relieve or redress him; all the comforts of this life are unsavoury to him. His aches, and grief, and diseases, hinder him much in spiritual performances, and in the prosecution of a better life; how much am I bound to the Lord, that it is not so with me! I can relish outward mercies,

[1] Carendo potius quam fruendo sapimus.

and am refreshed with bodily comforts. I have no such distemper or pain to take me off from prayer or Scripture, but I may be as frequent and as urgent as I will about my soul and eternal concernments. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all within me praise his holy name. Surely health is the prince, the first-born, of outward blessings. Though foolish men deprive themselves frequently of it, for the satisfaction of a sensual, wanton appetite, yet it is more worth than a thousand of those brutish transitory delights. A stomach is of more value than meat, and a good digestion than raiment. Men think not much to part with much of their wealth in their sickness for a little health. Oh, it deserves thy prayers to God for it, with submission to his will, when thou wantest it, and thy praising of God for it, with enlarged affections, when thou hast it!

3. In observing the necessity of a timely repentance, and its difficulty on a dying bed. How unfit is a man to begin to live, when he is racked with pain, and going to die. The dolour and trouble of his body are great impediments to the good of his soul. When the outward man is in great distress, and the inner man sympathising with it, the best words are often wasted and thrown away, and the mind is unfit either to receive counsel or comfort. Further, how irrational is it to give Satan our prime, our health, our strength, and God our weak, and consumptionate, and dying parts; to present our enemy with our quick, and nimble, and active faculties and members, and to put off our best friend with a body full of sores, and a soul full of sin. Besides, the longer men continue in sin, the more difficult their conversion will be. He that hath wandered or travelled out of the right way all day, will hardly be persuaded to go back all the way, and set out again at night. Where Satan hath dwelt long, he will hardly be removed. A ship, the longer it leaketh, the harder it is to be emptied. The farther a nail is driven in, the more trouble to get it out. The longer my soul continueth in disobedience, the harder it will be to bring it to repentance. The more sin is riveted and habituated in me, the more pains, and toil, and grief, it will cost to get it subdued and slain.

4. In learning more the excellency of grace, and an interest in Christ and God, which will do a man good in a day of sickness, and an hour of death. He is a friend indeed that is a friend in a day of adversity. The sinner's folly in neglecting durable riches, teacheth the Christian wherein true wisdom consisteth, and the worth of it; that it consisteth not in heaping up such treasures, or getting such

friends as will be useless and unprofitable in a time of need, but in laying up a treasure in heaven, and insuring eternal comforts. Cold sharp weather sheweth the value of a healthy constitution. A storm will speak the worth of a sure anchor and a skilful pilot. The excellency of grace, and holiness, and Christ, and God, are not fully known till we come into the other world, where all sublunary comforts are wanting; but the more any condition in this world resembleth that, and the nearer we approach that, the more visible is the value of divine and lasting blessings. A cordial is not esteemed till we come to fainting fits. A soul that in time of health, and wealth, and outward prosperity, made the fear and ways of God, and the estate of the godly, the object of his scorn and contempt, when he comes to be awakened by the alarum of death, and to look into the other world, will make them the object of his choice, and give a world, if he had it, for them.

A good wish about the visitation of the sick, wherein the former heads are applied.

The righteous Lord, and God of all grace, who for sin afflicteth man with sickness, yet in the midst of judgment remembereth mercy, intending his instruction, not his destruction, by it—having designed such afflictions, as rods to whip men to himself, to make them out of love with sin, the spring of all their sufferings and sorrows, and to wean them from the earth, who otherwise would make it their heaven; and hath also appointed men to be the means through which these mercies shall be conveyed, and sicknesses sanctified to them; I wish, in general, that I may never omit to visit those neighbours with pity, whom God hath visited in fury; much less insult, as the Edomites over the afflicted Israelites, and persecute them whom God hath smitten, drawing blood from those wounds which are already blue with the blows of the Almighty; but may be faithful to the precept and purpose of my God in this particular, and adopt my second table duties into the family of the first table, by visiting the sick, not out of common civility, but out of charity, and in obedience to the God of my health. It is my privilege that my alms may become sacrifice, my courtesies worship, and in paying that debt of love which I owe to my neighbour, I may pay that duty which I owe to my Maker. Oh that in all my common transactions I might move upon principles of reason, and,

especially in works that have a tendency God-ward, act upon grounds of religion. Lord, thou hast an eye to my good in all thy providences and dealings; why should not I have an eye to thy glory in all my practices and actings? Cause thy fear so to possess my heart, that I may visit the sick out of conscience, and let thy grace so assist and accompany my endeavours, that thou mayest visit them to their eternal comfort.

I wish that the command of my God may be a sufficient motive and warrant to make me set about the practice of this work. It is my duty to visit them that are sick, as I am the Lord's servant. I disown his authority, I deny his image, if I do not sympathise with others in misery. Nature itself commandeth me to be affected with the conditions of such as are afflicted. All creatures will commiserate those of their rank and order that are in misery. Bees will rather stay and starve with those of their kind that are unable to fly to their hives, by reason of the weakness of their wings, than stir from them or forsake them. The swine are so sensible of their fellows' sufferings, that if one of the company be lugged, all the rest will after their manner condole it. If a beast be slain, and its blood spilt, others of that sort will shew their love and pity by scraping earth on the blood, burying their fellow, and solemnising his funeral with a kind of lamentation. Grace doth much more enjoin me to be sick in others' sickness, poor in others' poverty, and to remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them, and them that suffer adversity, as being myself also in the body. David, speaking of his enemies that sought his destruction, saith, 'But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom. I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother,' Ps. xxxv. 13, 14. My God hath said, 'To him that is afflicted, pity should be shewn.' Sickness is one of the greatest outward afflictions; it renders all the comforts of this life uncomfortable. The largest houses, revenues, honours, the most loving acquaintance, friends, relations, are all unsavoury to them that are under great sickness. To visit the prosperous and healthy is courtesy, but to visit the distressed and sick is charity. The sweetest showers should fall on the lower grounds. Lord, thou art the Father of mercies, and art afflicted in all the afflictions of thy children; thy soul is grieved for the miseries of Israel. How suitable is it for them who expect mercy another day, to shew mercy at this day! Make me a follower of thee, as a dear child, to put on bowels of compassion, and

to be merciful in heart, tongue, and hand, as thou my Father in heaven art merciful.

I wish that, as a wise merchant, I may make the use of this price, which is put into my hand, for the furtherance of my own and my neighbours' peace. Sickness is a special opportunity, wherein I may advantage others' souls; the most poisonous viper is at such a season benumbed with cold, and so may be handled without much danger. The strength of the body of sin is much abated, at least in regard of act and exercise, by the weakness of the natural body. They who counted holiness a fancy, and holy ones fanatics, in their health and power, will beg hard for purity, and desire the saints' prayers in their sickness. The waters of those passions, which in a summer of prosperity did overflow their bounds, and threatened to overwhelm and overthrow all that was near, are frozen up in a winter of adversity, and kept within their banks; there are many nicks in time, as we see in a clock, which, if they hit, the work goeth on well. The hardened hearts of sinners are often melted, when their persons are confined to their warm chambers; as tinder when dry easily takes fire, by the least spark that falls on it, so when the souls of ungodly men are made soft by sickness, and their thoughts of the evil of sin in the pain it brings on their bodies, makes their affections combustible, it will be much the easier to kindle the fire of repentance in them. Affliction boreth or openeth the ear, and then it is seasonable to drop some wholesome counsel into it. Though a load on the ground be hard to be stirred, yet a load on the wheels is easy to be drawn. The illness, and aches, and distempers of sinners' bodies do, as it were, set the work of conversion, and minding the good of their souls, upon the wheel, and therefore such opportunities ought to be diligently improved. Sickness is a good time when charity is in season. It is a grace to have an opportunity for the service of my God, but a greater to improve it. The eastern people do plough and sow their grounds, when the former rain hath softened it; and why should not I endeavour to plough up the fallow-ground of my neighbour's heart, and to sow in it the seeds of savoury instructions, when it is made tender by sickness? Lord, thou layest hold of every opportunity to bless me with mercy answerable to my necessities; make me both wise to discern time and judgment, and faithful to make use of all such seasons to do thee service.

I wish that the opportunity I have thereby of doing good to my own soul, may move me to be the more careful and conscientious in visiting the sick. It is the wise man's speech, 'It is better to go

into the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting; for that is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to heart.' It is better, as it is most suitable to my present state. It is not proper for pilgrims to spend their time in pleasure. Sorrow is becoming in a valley of tears. A house of mourning agrees well with the mourners in Zion. This world is a sea, I am a mariner, and mariners rejoice in the haven, not in the tempestuous ocean. This life is a warfare, I am a soldier; it is too soon to be joyful whilst I am fighting; it will be time enough when all my enemies are foiled. Oh how harsh is it for a child to be jocund, when he is far from home! Weeping is good language for them that sit down by the river of Babylon; how can I sing the Lord's songs in a strange land? Again, it is better to go into the house of mourning, as it is most profitable to my precious soul. Grace thrives best in a wet soul; 'by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.' The inner man is best when clad in mourning. Trees planted by the water-side hang with clusters, and bring forth fruit in due season. The sick-bed is a pulpit, and though there be a wicked man in it, he may teach me rare instructions; if he be wholly silent, his condition preacheth to me that sin is the greatest evil, that the world is a cheat and imposture, and that grace is the most desirable created good. His dark chamber, weeping friends, watered couch, aching head, trembling heart, pale lips, quivering loins, all call aloud to me to consider of and prepare for such an hour. Abel, being dead, yet speaketh; my sick, my dead neighbour speaketh, Prepared be to follow me. Some have been raised to life by beholding the dead. Oh that I were wise to observe and improve the opportunities which free grace affordeth me, for my own and others' welfare! If I lose a good market for the furtherance of my outward estate, I befool and bewail myself. Ah, why should I not be as much affected with the loss of opportunities for my inner man! Sinners observe their seasons for the gratifying their loves, and the satisfying their lusts. The thief waiteth for the full purse till the market is over, and commodities be sold. The adulterer makes use of the dark night for his deeds of darkness. Satan watcheth every opportunity to ensnare and destroy me; if I give him the least advantage, by idleness or carnal security, or running into occasions of sin, he doth presently lay hold on it to pollute me. All men indeed may shame me. The mariner doth spread his sails when the winds blow. The merchant observes his exchange hours, when he may meet with many friends, and despatch much business in a little time. The lawyer minds his terms.

There is a time when kings go out to battle, 2 Sam. xi. 1, which soldiers will not neglect. The husbandman makes hay whilst the sun shines; yet, ah, how foolish am I to let slip those golden seasons which my God giveth me, for working out my own salvation! Lord, thou hast made everything beautiful in its season; but poor silly man knoweth not his time, Eccles. iii. 11, and ix. 12. Grant me so much prudence, that, as the men of Issachar, I may have understanding of the times, 1 Chron. xii. 32, and so much piety as to serve the times, not as worldlings, in altering my course according to the fashions and customs of men, but in embracing what is tendered in due time, for my own and others' good, always adhering to the commands of thee my God.

I wish that the uncertainty of my sick neighbour's outward recovery, may make me the more careful and solicitous about his spiritual health. If he die, he is stated and fixed for ever and ever, and I am for ever deprived of all opportunities of profiting or advantaging his soul. Now he is sick, he is nigh death, but one step from it. The sick stand upon the borders of the grave, upon the brink of the pit, nay, of eternity. Those that are in most perfect health, are inclining towards death; but they that are sick, are approaching the chambers of darkness. Such a man may speak, in the language of Haman, 'My life draweth nigh unto the grave,' Ps. lxxxviii. 3. Should he depart this life in a natural estate, he falleth into the jaws of eternal death. All prayers for him will then be fruitless, and there is no giving counsel to him after death. I must now advise, exhort, persuade, beseech him to mind faith and repentance, or never do it; I must now put up hearty cries and groans to God on his behalf, or never do it. The loving-kindness of God cannot be declared in the grave, nor his faithfulness in destruction, Ps. lxxxviii. 11. When he is wailing in hell for the ungodliness of his heart and life, I may be weeping on earth for my neglect of him, or unfaithfulness to him, but both our tears will be ineffectual, and our cries comfortless. Oh that the love of my Saviour, the command of my God, the worth of a soul, the weight of an eternal estate, the fear of losing such a season, and the impossibility of recalling or recovering it, may all provoke me to be instant with the sick, to turn to God, and abhor and bewail their sins, and to be fervent with God, that he would crown my endeavours with success! Lord, I may speak thy mind and will to men, but thou alone, who didst make the ear, canst enable them to hear; let it please thy Majesty so to affect my heart with a due sense of others' misery, so to direct my tongue what to

speak in order to their recovery, and so to prosper the undertakings of thy servant, that as often as I visit any unconverted person in his sickness, I may turn a sinner from the error of his ways, save a soul alive, and hide a multitude of sins.

I wish that I may be solicitous to understand the spiritual conditions of the sick, that my prescriptions may be profitable, being suitable to their several sores. The knowledge of the disease must necessarily precede directions for its cure. It is folly to undertake their recovery, whose estates I am ignorant of. He works at the labour-in-vain who goeth about to heal a wounded patient, when he knoweth not the place or nature of his pain. The mistake of the physician may be as mortal and dangerous as the disease itself. It will be no wonder if a blind man shoot awry, and miss the mark. This was the cause that Job's friends, though holy men, and designing a good end, wandered exceedingly; and instead of administering comfort by their visitation, wounded him to the quick, and proved his greatest cross. The Sabeans and Chaldeans robbed him of his cattle, Satan wronged him in his body, but his three friends vexed his soul, and did break him in pieces with words. Their ignorance was the ground of the hurt they offered, instead of the help they intended, Job xix. 2. A friend may do that mischief upon a false supposition, which an enemy doth out of malice. Though the doctrine be true and right, if the application of it be wrong, I may kill sooner than cure the person to whom I apply it. The husbandman must know the nature of his ground before he casteth in his seed, or otherwise he will miss of his expected crop. Lord, thou knowest the conditions and dispositions of all men by immediate intuition, and needest not that any should testify of man; thou knowest how needful it is for me to understand by rational discourse who and what those sick persons are, how things stand betwixt thy Majesty and their souls, whose recovery I go about. Oh help me to find out their sickness, and to give such advice out of thy word, that thou mayest work their cure!

I wish that, when the condition of the sick person is found out, neither fear nor flattery may make me unfaithful to his soul. Those prescriptions cannot be profitable that are not answerable to his estate. I am unfaithful to God, my neighbour, and myself, if my application be not suitable to his condition. My God commandeth me to proclaim war against the presumptuous, to preach peace to the penitent; and if I act otherwise out of fear or affection, I act contrary to my commission; I am false to my trust if I keep not close to the will of my Lord. He that takes not his

master's precepts for his rule, will at last be counted and punished as an unfaithful servant. I hinder also my neighbour's good, whilst I give him counsel unsuitable to his case. I may pretend love and respect, but it is real hatred to flatter him who is hastening to the unquenchable fire. How dreadful will his fall be, from the high turret of presumption into the infernal pit of perdition! and how little thanks will he give me in the other world for cozening his soul, by telling him all was well, till he came to see his own and my mistake in hell! Again, the guilt of such a crime would make a deep gash in my own conscience. It is ill slighting or tampering with inestimable souls. His blood will be required at my hands; and if the blood of a slain body cry so loud for vengeance, what will the blood of a murdered soul do? Why should I, to humour any man's lust, injure his soul, hinder my own peace, and incur the anger of the Lord? Oh that no foolish pretences whatsoever may keep me off from acquainting sinners with the evil and end, the nature and danger of their sins. It is God's order, first to cast the soul down, and then to lift it up. The ground must feel the plough before it receive the seed. Sorrow must precede comfort; and they must sow in tears who would reap in joy. God must shake all nations before the desired of all nations will come to him. We come to Sinai, the mount that burneth with fire, and to blackness and darkness, and a tempest which makes even a Moses to fear and quake exceedingly, before we come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel. The law is a schoolmaster to drive us to Christ. Austere John, with his axe laid to the root of the tree, threatening the fire to those that bring not forth fruit, prepareth the way for the sweet alluring Jesus. Mourning and grief is the midwife of true mirth; penitential tears are the streams that lead to the rivers of pleasures. Even the doleful sound of the trumpet attendeth the judge when he is going to acquit a prisoner by public proclamation. Violence must be offered to corruption, or there will be no acceptance of the Lord Christ. The building of holiness is the more strong for having its foundation of humiliation laid deep. The safety of the soul doth depend, like Jonah's, upon his being cast overboard, and utterly lost in his own apprehension.

The blessed Jesus himself is brought into a desolate wilderness, before angels are sent from heaven to comfort him. Oh that I might follow my God in his usual way, and never prophesy smooth

things to rugged and wicked men, but endeavour to break their hearts on earth, who have persisted in the breach of his holy laws, that their backs may not be broken in hell. Yet I would not, instead of beating down the rotten paper walls of presumption, drive any into the dungeon of desperation; but, as the good nurse, have the breast of consolation, as well as the rod of correction, in readiness for such children. Moses and Christ met together upon Mount Tabor. The gospel must be preached to heal those wounds which are opened and discovered by the law. The Lord sendeth me to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. Lord, thou killest and makest alive, bringest down to the grave, and bringest up. It is easy and ordinary with thee to break those bones which thou intendest to rejoice, and to perplex those rams in briers and thorns which thou intendest to accept of as a sacrifice. Teach thy servant to know how to speak a word in season, both to the wicked and to the godly; how to divide thy word aright, both in its minatory and consolatory parts, that, as occasion shall be, I may awaken the wicked out of their deadly slumbers, and quicken the godly to their spiritual watchfulness, and help to sweeten that bitter cup which thou hast put into their hands. Oh that thy blessing might water my labours for both their welfares! Alas! poor sick unregenerate ones are dropping into boundless and endless sorrows, and yet are without sense. Though they are dying, they know not what they are doing, nor whither they are going. Their eyes are shut by the god of this world, that they see not that unspeakable misery to which they are liable every moment; their hearts are hardened through custom in sin, that neither threatenings nor promises prevail with them to feel their wounds and sores. O thou great physician, thou Lord of life, thou God of health, open their eyes; send some Ananias to them, that they might receive their sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost; enable them so to mourn now, that they may be comforted when the time of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and help thy servant to deal so faithfully with those whom thou callest me to visit, that I may never give thy Majesty cause to say of me, as once of the prophets of Israel, 'They have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace.'

I wish that I may be close and home in my applications to sick persons, and speak what is proper to their estates, with ardency and affection, to their very hearts. It is ill dallying with edged tools. Oh, how sad is it to toy and trifle, to be formal or customary, in

counsel, or reproof, or comfort to immortal souls that are launching into the ocean of eternity! Death is a serious thing, and that which they never did before, nor shall ever do again. Sin is a serious thing, as the damned find in hell by woeful experience. Though there they are in blackness of darkness, yet they have light enough to see sin to be the evil of evils, and altogether sinful. Christ was serious when he took upon him my nature, and therein did offer up himself a sacrifice for sin. God is serious in commanding faith and repentance, and in promising heaven to the faithful and holy, and hell to unbelievers and atheists; and shall not I be serious and in earnest when I am dealing about matters of eternal life and death, and about the concernments of God and Christ, and souls and eternity? Oh, with what earnestness should I persuade the wicked to turn from their wickedness and live! If ever their souls would draw near to the Lord of life, it concerns them to do it when their bodies are drawing nigh to the chambers of death. It is but a very few hours, and their condition will be past all amendment, all alteration. In this poor pittance of time, all must be done upon which the scales must turn for their salvation or damnation. They are going to make that change which will admit them into endless joy or torment, and render their estates unchangeable. Their time is hastening that they must struggle with dreadful pains, and strong distempers, and death, the king of terrors, and must review that life which is ending, and look back upon all that they have done, and judge their persons and actions impartially, whether they will or no; that they must take their leave of all their friends, and food, and sleep, and lands, and houses, and honours, and pleasures, and riches, and step into eternity, and appear before God, without their relations, or possessions, or any worldly comforts to help or encourage them; that they must be tried by a holy law, and a holy judge, for their everlasting lives or deaths; and can my expressions be too full of weight and reason, or my affections too full of bowels and pity, in my dealing and discourse with such men? Lord, thou knowest the poor silly children of men are unable to judge of eternal affairs according to their weight; they are quickly lost, when in their thoughts they begin to launch into that boundless sea. The ponderousness of the subject is ready to affright and press them down, being so much beyond and above their shallow understandings. But wouldst thou please to enable them, though it were but to peep into the other world, and to behold, through some crevice, what is doing and enjoyed there, both by thy friends and thine enemies, they would soon have

other thoughts of thee and thy service, and other carriages when they are about thy work. The greatest seriousness would then be too little, the greatest ardour would not be thought enough for thy worship. They would then, indeed, be fervent in spirit when they are serving the Lord. Oh teach thy servant, though he cannot see into the other world with the eye of sense, yet so to look into it with an eye of faith, that he may transact the concerns thereof with that diligence, faithfulness, and fervency which thou acceptest, and whilst he liveth be zealous of good works!

I wish that my heart may be so affected with pity towards sick and afflicted persons, that I may often and earnestly remember them in my prayers. A little captive, considering the leprosy of her master, was instrumental for his cure, by crying out, 'Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy.' I have more reason, when I behold a leprous soul, near its last gasp, to look up to heaven with, Would to God that poor creature were with Jesus Christ, that great prophet of his church, who is able and willing to enliven, and pardon, and sanctify, and save! would to God he would be persuaded to come to Christ, to cling to Christ, to close with Christ! for he would recover him. And what do I know but my prayers may be prevalent on his behalf? Christ, when dying, prayed for his enemies, for them that imbrued their hands in his blood; and shall not I pray for my friends when they are dying, and possibly ignorant whither they are going? My prayers are a cheap courtesy, and diminish nothing of my estate, either spiritual or temporal. Their misery is an awakening motive to the duty. Never did they stand in such need of help from others, and wrestling with God on their behalves, as now that they are taking their journey into a far country, and entering upon an unchangeable condition. They may say to me, as Nehemiah to Geshem, I am doing a great work, &c. I am going to die, to bid adieu to all the folly, and vanity, and comforts of this world, to take possession of my long home, of the place wherein I must abide for ever. Oh pray for us, that we may be pardoned and saved, that we may repent and believe, that we may die in the faith, and obtain the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto life eternal. They have many distractions upon their own spirits, by reason of pains and bodily distempers, and the loss and lamentation of their kindred and relations, that they cannot pour out their hearts to God with that freeness, and seriousness, and earnestness which probably they desire. Their enemies, and assaults, and temptations at such a time are more quick, and strong, and

violent, and full of rage, having but a short time. I must now pray for them, or never pray for them; now beg mercy for them, or never beg mercy for them. When their life is gone, all tears, and cries, and groans for them are in vain. David's greatest passions for dead Absalom were to no purpose. They are then gone the way they shall not return, and fixed in that place whence they shall never remove. Lord, I confess that my narrow heart hath not pity enough for afflicted, and sick, and dying souls, and my weak hands have not power enough to supply or support them in their sad estates; but thou hast both. Oh be pleased to look down from heaven, the habitation where thine holiness dwelleth; behold their miseries, hide thy face from all their iniquities, out of thine infinite fulness relieve their necessities! Let the eyes of their souls be opened to see their sins and their Saviour, before the eyes of their bodies be closed. Give them patience and strength answerable to the burden thou layest on their backs; enable them to do their last works well, and let them be better than their first. Open thou their lips, and let their mouths shew forth thy praise, before they go to the place of silence. Stand by them in their last conflict with their enemies, death and devils, that they may overcome both—be more than conquerors through him that loves them, and pass through the jaws of death to the joys of a blessed eternal life!

I wish that my soul may be the more sound for every visit I bestow on sick bodies. There is not so much danger of catching their outward diseases, as there is hope of increasing my spiritual health, if I am not wanting to myself. The sick and dying bed is a pulpit, out of which I may be instructed more fully in many serious truths, though the sick or dying man be speechless. King Joash obtained three famous victories over the Syrians, by visiting sick Elisha, and might have gotten a complete conquest over them, if it had not been his own fault, 2 Kings xiii. 14–20. The fight of sick and dying men may assist me in my conflicts with the three great enemies of my present purity, and future comfort and bliss. It teacheth me how vain it is to make provision for that flesh which will itself ere long be provision for worms. Ah, how foolish am I to pamper and please that which, instead of relieving or refreshing, will in my extremity pierce and pain me! It teacheth me that the world itself is the greatest cheat and impostor in the world. That though it laughs and smiles on men, dandling them on her knees, and hugging them in her arms, whilst they are in health, and promising all sorts of comforts and pleasures; yet in their sickness and misery she turns them off and leaves them, as Absalom's mule did

him, to be shot through with the heart-cutting arrows of eternal death. By discovering the emptiness and falseness of these two seeming ends, the flesh and the world, it helpeth me to overcome my third enemy, and to repel the fiery darts of the devil. The cup of temptation, which hath so often bewitched me to drink down his deadly poison, had its prevalency from the worldly profit with which the outside was gilded, or the fleshly pleasure with which the inside was sweetened. Ah, could I but bid a hearty defiance to the world and the flesh, and conquer them, I need not fear the wicked one. They are the powerful advocates by which Satan pleads, and too often prevails with the soul; by these handmaids he wooeth the mistress. But the sick-bed is a book in which I may read their deceitfulness and treachery, their perfidiousness and fallacies, and thereby learn to avoid them.

Further, I may read the sinfulness of sin in others' sickness. That parent must needs be a deformed monster, that begets such uncomely and ill-favoured children. In the dreadful effects I may behold the poisonous cause. Man had never known sickness in his body, if he had not known sin experimentally in his soul. It is the plague and stone of the heart that causeth those in the flesh. When I behold the sick man labouring under his distemper, how he is chastened with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain, so that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat; how his flesh is consumed away that it cannot be seen, and his bones stick out; he is filled with tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day; when I behold his eyes sinking, his heart panting, his wife and children wailing and wringing their hands, his friends weeping, his tongue faltering, his throat rattling, his breath failing, his strength languishing, his whole body in a cold clammy sweat, wrestling with his pain and disease, may I not well cry out, Oh what an evil is sin, which bringeth all this upon the poor children of men! My Redeemer is therefore said to bear our sicknesses, because he bare our sins in his body on the tree, 1 Peter ii. 24; Mat. viii. 17; and in all his applications for the cure of the diseased, he had an eye to the root of the malady. To one that was diseased he said, 'Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee;' to another, 'Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.' When the angel was smiting Israel with a pestilence, holy David's thoughts ran upon the procuring cause, 'I have sinned, I have done very wickedly.' My God teacheth Israel the grievous nature of their defilement in the greatness of those judgments which they brought upon them. Speaking of his severity towards

them, he tells them, 'Thy way and thy doings have procured those things unto thee; this is thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thine heart,' Jer. iv. 18. Our bodies are full of natural corruption, because our souls are full of moral corruption. Oh how fitly may I therefore, when I behold the evil of affliction on others, abhor and bewail the evil of sin in myself!

Once more, I may be instructed in the necessity of a timely preparation for such an hour of affliction. Can I think a sick-bed a fit place, an hour of pain and grief a meet season, to begin that great business of turning from sin, of loathing myself for all my abominations, and working out my own salvation? Is it rationally to be imagined that trembling joints, dazzled eyes, a fainting heart, failing limbs, a body full of aches and diseases, a soul sympathising with it, and full of vexation and grief, should be fit instruments about such a work, which an angelical strength, and agility, and freedom, is little enough for? Ah, what wise man would build his eternal making and welfare upon such a tottering and sandy foundation! The greatest strength, and longest time, and most vigorous health, is not in the least degree too much for this needful and weighty business; and shall I put it off till my strength fails, my health is gone, and my time near its last sand? Lord, beside all these, I may learn the excellency of thine image and thy favour. Sickness cannot waste them, nor death itself destroy them. Where the curtains are drawn, and the windows close, in the darkest chamber of the dying man, the comeliness of thy likeness, and the sweetness of thy love, are most sparkling and glorious. The want of outward comforts doth convince the unbelieving world of the worth of eternal blessings. When the flesh and world, that made show of such love to their deluded favourites, turn them off in their extremity, as the Jews did Judas, complaining to them of his folly and wickedness, 'What is that to us? see thou to that.' Thou standest by and ownest thy servants, thou knowest their souls in their days of adversity; and, however thou dealest with them in their health, wilt be sure to tend and look to, to be both nurse and physician to thy sick children. Thy grace is a reviving cordial, and thy love will make even death itself a sweet and desirable dish. Oh help thy poor servant to gain much spiritual good by those natural evils which others suffer! As others' sickness speaketh these things to mine ears, and their conditions make them visible to mine eyes, do thou write them in my heart, that all such providences of thine towards others may make sin more ugly, the world more empty, thy graces and favour more comely and desir-

able, and that, furthering my purity at present, they may further my eternal peace hereafter.

Finally, I wish that the sickness of others may cause me to be the more industrious in a faithful improvement of my health, and take me wholly off from priding, and pampering, and making provision for that flesh, which is so apt to breed diseases, and in its greatest beauty and strength is so near to death. The goodliest structure of body is but earth a little better wrought, or more curiously than usually moulded up, and with an ordinary disease is marred and defaced, and so calleth on me to be humble rather than lifted up. The flesh that I provide for my flesh, is not more subject to corruption, or more perishing, than the flesh for which it is provided. Within a few days I shall have an end both of food and feeding. Oh that I might waste that body in God's service, which will ere long waste with sickness! spend and be spent in his work, who gives me my health, and strength, and hath promised a bountiful reward! Sure I am, I can never bring them to a better market, nor put them off at a higher price. Is it not better to consume my flesh in doing good, in glorifying my God, than with idleness and ease, or with distempers and diseases? Satan's servants do not grudge to give their prime and chief, their health and strength, to their lusts; and shall not I give mine to my Lord? Ah, Lord, an unthankful, selfish, unbelieving heart, hath too much hindered me from, and disturbed me in, those excellent duties which thou callest me to. Oh deliver me from it, for thy mercies' sake! Strengthen me by thy good Spirit, both to do good to, and receive good by, such as thou chastenest with sickness; so to consider the poor and afflicted, and to visit others in my health, that thou mayest visit me with thy saving health. Strengthen me upon my bed of languishing, and make all my bed in my sickness, that my most mortal sickness may not be unto death (eternal), but for thy glory, and my passage into endless bliss; yea, that in the other world, I may stand among thy sheep on thy right hand, and hear that blessed heart-cheering voice, 'Come, thou blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for thee before the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and thou gavest me meat; I was thirsty, and thou gavest me drink; I was a stranger, and thou didst take me in; I was sick, and thou visitedst me;' when my soul shall be above all sin, and my body above all sickness, and both blessed in thy favour and fruition, for ever and ever. Amen.

CHAPTER VIII.

How a Christian may exercise himself to godliness on a dying bed.

Sixthly, and lastly, Thy duty is to exercise thyself to godliness, if God give thee opportunity, on a dying bed. The work of a saint is to glorify God, not only in his life, but also in his death. The silk-worm stretcheth out herself before she spin, and ends her life in her long-wrought clew. The Christian must stretch out himself on his dying bed, and end his life in the work of his Lord. Every man by his death payeth his debt to nature. He is earth in regard of his original creation, and must be earth in regard of his ultimate resolution: 'Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return,' Gen. iii. 19. The sinner, when he dieth, payeth his debt to sin, Satan, and the law. To sin, as he is the servant of unrighteousness, and so must receive its wages, which is death; to Satan, as he hath sold himself to work wickedness at his will, and so must have his tempter to be his eternal tormentor; to the law, as he hath violated its precepts and commands, and therefore must undergo its punishment and curse. The saint, when he dieth, payeth his debt to God, for he oweth him honour as well by his death as by his life. Hence we read, not only of their living in the Lord, and to the Lord, but also of their dying in the Lord, and to the Lord, Rom. xiv. 8; Rev. xiv. 13. Which, though some expound, in that place of the Revelation, to the cause for which they died,—they did not die out of humour, or obstinacy, or any carnal, selfish interest, but purely as martyrs at God's call, and for God's cause; they loved not their lives to the death for the testimony of Jesus;—yet the words may as clearly speak—

1. The state in which they died. They died in the favour of God, reconciled to him through the death of the Mediator. The castle of their souls was not taken by storm, or in a state of enmity and opposition, but by a quiet voluntary surrender, or in a state of peace and amity.

2. The manner of their deaths. They died in the fear of God; they exercised grace as well in sickness as in health, and when dying as when living; their spiritual motions were quick, when their natural motions were slow.

Plutarch reports of Lucius Metellus, high priest of Rome, that though he lived to a great old age, his voice did not fail him, nor

his hand shake in his sacrificing to the gods. It is said of Moses, when he was a hundred and twenty years old and died, that his natural sight did not fail him, neither was his heat abated. So it may be said of the Christian, that though he die old, his spiritual sight doth not fail him, nor his divine heat abate. As Caleb, he is as strong in regard of grace, his inward strength, when he is entering into the promised Canaan, as he was when he first went forth as a spy by faith, to search the land flowing with milk and honey. The heathen counted him happy that died either in the midst of the goods of fortune—hence they say, if Priamus had died a little before the loss of his town, he had died the greatest prince in all Asia—or in the exercise of their moral virtues. Hence they so highly extol Seneca and Socrates, who seemed to dare even death itself, out of resolution and fortitude. Though those seeming virtues were but, as Augustine terms them, *splendida flagitia*, famous vices, and their confidence arose not from any grounded knowledge of their good estates, but from their blindness and ignorance of their depraved, wicked, and woeful estates. He is the happy man indeed that dieth in the faith, that sleepeth in Jesus, that goeth to his grave in the exercise of grace. The master of moral philosophy commendeth that pilot whom a shipwreck swalloweth up at the stern, with the rudder in his hand. The most high God commendeth that person whom death seizeth, doing the work for which he was sent into the world. Even the blind mole, if naturalists may be credited, opens his eyes when he comes to die; and the crooked serpent stretcheth out herself straight, when she is going to fetch her last breath: and shall not the saint be best at last?

Reader, observe how careful the saints have been to do their last work well, and to go out of the world like some sweet spices, perfuming the room in which they fetch their last breath with holiness, and leaving a sweet savour behind them. Jacob, when dying, worshipped, leaning on his staff, Heb. xi. 21. What a character doth he give of the angel of the covenant! and what blessings doth he pray for, and prophesy to come on his children, when he was going from them! How was his heart enlarged in pantings after the Lord Christ! Gen. xlviii. 16, and xlix. *per tot.* The living waters of his graces ran with the greater strength, when they were emptying themselves into the ocean of glory. Moses, like the dying swan, sings most sweetly, being to go up to Mount Nebo to die there. What excellent doctrines, reproofs, instructions, doth he deliver to the Israelites! How pathetically, rhetorically, divinely, doth he dictate his last legacies to his political children! Who can read,

and not be ravished with wonder and delight, Deut. xxxii. and xxxiii. Joshua, like the morning star, shines brightest at last; he gives his people so strict a charge to serve the Lord, such gracious counsel, when he was going the way of all the earth, that it could not but be remembered many days after. Dying Joseph will lay his bones at stake for God's faithfulness, and that he will visit Israel and deliver them out of Egypt. Samson did the church of God more service, in slaying more of her enemies at his death, than in his life. Julius Cæsar among the Romans, and Olympia, the mother of Alexander, among the Grecians, were famous for their care to die handsomely, and not to commit at last any ill-beseeming action, whereby their memories should have been rendered inglorious; but the Christians' care hath always been, to die holily, and to do their God most service when they are going to that place, where they shall do him no more in a proper sense. Philosophers[1] tell us that the soul, upon death's approach, is more divine and supernaturally inclined; certain it is, the soul of a saint only doth then more aspire heavenward, when it is returning πρὸς τὸ πρόγονον θεῖον, to its original divinity, according to Plotinus's phrase of death. As his Saviour, he brings out his best wine at last, and his last works are more than his first, Rev. ii. 19.

The blessed Prince, and Lord of life, should be our pattern at death. He got his Father most glory, he did his church most good, by his death, though he was eminently serviceable to both all his lifetime. It is said of him, he was obedient, Phil. ii. 7, to the death; which may import,

1. His continuance in well-doing. His obedience lasted to the last moment of his life; so should ours. Elisha would not leave his master, till taken from him into heaven; and we should not leave our Lord, till taken to him into heaven. Polycarp, in his old age being urged by the proconsul to deny Christ, answered, I have served him eighty-six years, and he never once hurt me, and shall I now deny him?

2. His obedience in his death. His death was a free-will offering, in obedience to his Father's command. Not only his birth and life was an answer to his Father's call, 'A body hast thou prepared,' &c. 'Then said I, Lo, I come (to put on that body, to take upon me that nature, and thereby and therein) to do thy will, O God;' but also his death was in pursuance of his duty: 'This commandment received I of my Father.' Thus the Christian's death must be offered up as a sacrifice to God, in obedience to his command.

[1] Xen., lib. viii., Plut., Apol.

The sinner's soul is pressed to this war, in which there is no discharge: 'This night thy soul shall be required of thee.' The saint, understanding the orders from the Lord of hosts, is a volunteer; he gives up the ghost: 'Into thy hands, Lord, I commend my spirit.'

3. The gracious manner of his dying. The Sun of righteousness, when setting, did shine most gloriously. Though at his death he had such infinite disadvantage, being to wrestle with the frowns of an incensed God, the fury of earth and hell, and met with clouds, black and thick enough to have obscured the graces, and hindered the holiness of any but himself from shining at all, yet how brightly did they break forth in the midst of all those fogs, and mists, and darkness! What holy counsel and comfort did he give his disciples to prepare them for his departure, in his last (and one of his longest) sermon! John xiv., xv., xvi. What a heavenly prayer doth he put up to his Father for them, and all his elect! to give them both a taste and a pledge of that intercession which he was going to heaven to make for them. When he was hanging on the cross, under such a heavy weight as the sins of the whole world, grace was not depressed. His love to his mother is observable: 'Woman, behold thy son! And from that hour that disciple took her to his own house,' John xix. 26. But his love to his members, though enemies, was wonderful: 'Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.' His faith in his Father: 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.' His pity to one of the thieves. His patience in bearing the scoffing words and taunts, more bitter than wormwood, of them that passed by, reviling him, as well as in suffering the racking of his bones, and whole body, and the anger of an infinite God in his soul, without any murmuring, may well call for our admiration. Reader, he hath set thee a pattern, that thou shouldst follow his steps. Some tell us the phœnix of Saba, in Arabia Fælix, (so called from Phœnicea, or the purple colour of her wings,) liveth six hundred and sixty years, at the end of which time she buildeth her a nest of cassia, calamus, cinnamon, and other precious spices and gums, which the sun, by the extremity of his heat, and the wavering of her wings, fires, and she, taking delight in the sweetness of the savour, hovers so long over it, that she burns herself in her own nest.[1] Thus did the blessed Jesus, and thus ought his followers, to expire in a nest of sweet spices, the exercise of the graces of the Holy Spirit. It was a poor farewell to the world, which even Octavius Augustus gave

[1] Plin., lib. ix. cap. 35.

when at the point of death he called for his looking-glass, commanded to have his head and beard combed, and his shrivelled cheeks smoothed up; then asking his friends if he had acted his part well; *Cum ita responderint, Vos omnes igitur, inquit, plaudite.*[1] It is a dreadful conclusion which Pliny relates the Hyperboreans to make, who, when they have lived to one hundred years or more, make a great feast, to which they invite all their friends, and after their jollity and mirth, throw themselves down a steep rock, and so perish.

Ungodly men are always worst at last; when they come to the bottom, they are flat and dead, and nothing but grounds and dregs. How often, in the eyes of the world, do wicked persons go out like a lamp, leaving a stench behind them! The scandalous sinner usually, like the goat's beard, or star of Jerusalem, closeth up the flower of his presumptuous hope at high noon; he is cast in his own conscience long before his death. The hypocrite ordinarily, as the daisy and dandelion, declares the approach of the evening by shutting up before its approach. If he be gold in the morning, and silver at noon, yet (as we say of butter) he is lead at night. What is the hope of the hypocrite, when God shall take away his soul! As it is storied of the Pandora, a people in India, that in their youth they have silver hairs, but in their age their hairs are quite black; or as the she-wolf hath a yearly defect in generation—the first time she hath five, the second time four, then three, then two, then one, then barren ever after; so the hypocrite declines and decreaseth in goodness, faster than the moon in its last quarter, and is commonly worst at last. But the sincere Christian hath his best at the bottom, and hath his daintiest dish reserved to be served in at the last course. Naturalists tell us of honey, that that is the thickest and best honey which is squeezed last out of the comb. Oh, what excellent periods and endings, both in regard of the exercise of grace and comfort, have many of the children of God made! The death-bed to some saints hath been like Tharah to the Israelites in the wilderness, where, after many journeys, growing near to the land of Canaan, they rested themselves, and it was called Tharah, from Roah and Tarah, which signifieth a breathing time. The sun, when it declines into the west, hath even then much more light than any of the stars. The meanest upright Christian, when he is near setting, hath more joy and comfort than a specious hypocrite any day of his life. When some asked Œcolampadius, lying on his death-bed, whether the light did not offend him, he

[1] Suetonius.

answered, pointing to his breast, *Hic sat lucis*, Here is abundance of light, of joy. He asked one of his friends, What news? His friend told him, None. Then, saith he, I will tell you some news —I shall presently be with my Lord Christ!

I shall give thee two or three quickening motives, and then direct thee about the work of exercising thyself to godliness on a dying bed; and because it is the last time of a Christian's working for his God, I shall in the third place annex some brief helps to this duty.

In reference to the motives, consider—

First, What a serious thing death will be to every man and woman in the world. It is ill and dangerous for any to cozen themselves, and undertake to mock God in their health and life; but it is worst of all and desperate for any to do this on a sick and dying bed. The heathen, hardened in sin, and wholly under the power of Satan, ignorant of the evil of their hearts and lives, and of the sad consequence of a wicked end, made light of death. Flavius Vespasian, none of the worst of the Roman emperors, died, as Sir Thomas Moore, with a jest in his mouth: *Ut puto, Deus fio;* Methinks I am going and growing to be a god. Augustus Cæsar, esteemed the best of them, whose death the people so much lamented, that they said, *Utinam aut non nasceretur, aut non moreretur*, Would he had never been born, or never died, went off the stage of the world with a compliment, *Livia, nostri conjugii memor vive, et vale*, Farewell, and live, wife, mindful of our marriage. Galba died desperately, crying out, *Feri, si ex re sit populi Romani*, Strike, if it be for the common good. Tiberius died dissemblingly, of whose death Tacitus wittily, *Jam Tiberium vires et corpus, non dissimulatio, deserebant*, Now strength and life hath left Tiberius, but not dissimulation.[1] But Christians, who understand the holiness and justice of God, the infinite demerit of sin, the certainty of an unchangeable condition in the other world, either in joy or torment, know that death is no jesting matter; that to die is one of the most serious, searching things that they can possibly do.

Two or three particulars will shew what a serious thing death is.

1. Death will try men. When the bridegroom comes, it will appear who have oil in their vessels, and who have none. As soon as ever thou takest thy leave of temporal good things, thy spiritual riches will be known. A scorching summer discovers what streams are fed with ponds, and what with springs. The wind sheweth which clouds have rain in them, and which have none. Death will anatomise every soul, and reveal all that is in it. Conscience will

[1] Seuton., Aurel., Victor.

then bring in a true verdict, in despite of all those bribes and frights which formerly kept the bill in suspense, or caused it to write on it an ignoramus. There are marks by which saints and sinners may be distinguished whilst they live, as great men's servants are by the liveries that they wear; but these characters, being most inward, and known to none but themselves, and the Lord they serve, it is their dying only that will reveal infallibly what they are, and to whom they belong. This world is as a common inn, wherein all are lodged, and no difference is made between the good and bad, only that the worst men have the best usage; but the very moment of men's dissolution makes a plain and vast distinction. Death is the way of all the earth, according to Joshua's periphrasis of it; but this way hath two turnings, one on the right hand, to joy and bliss, another on the left hand, to misery and horror. Now, as when the attendants of two lords travel together on the road, their servants cannot easily be distinguished, especially if the servants of the one counterfeit the livery of the other; but when they come to the *bivium*, the parting way, then it is clearly known who belong to the one, and who to the other, for each then followeth his own master, waits on him to his house, stayeth and abideth there with him. So, though whilst men live, all professing themselves Christians, and most, for a show at least, putting on the livery of Christ, it is not known who belong to the Prince of life, and who to the prince of the powers of the air; but death will discover it to themselves and the elect angels.

2. It will appear that death is a serious thing, in that it stateth the creature for eternity. When thou diest, thy condition will be like the law of the Medes and Persians, such as cannot be altered. At death thou goest the way that thou shalt never return. David, speaking of his dead child, saith, 'I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me;' and Job, by asking the question, denieth it: 'If a man die, shall he live again?' God will never trust thee with a second life, or give thee leave for second thoughts, or better purposes, or more serious and sober actions, when thou art once landed in the other world. He will not offer thee a Christ, and grace, and heaven, when thou art gone from this earth. Think of it seriously, is not that work to be done well, which can be done but once? Shouldst thou not use thine utmost care, and strength, and diligence to die well, when thy everlasting making or marring dependeth on it? Ah, friend, if thou failest now, thou failest for ever; if thou dalliest now, thou art undone eternally: 'There is no wisdom nor knowledge in the grave, whither thou art going,' Eccles. ix. 10.

3. Death will appear to be a serious thing, in that all the powers of hell will then assault thee. Thou mayest say of it, in some respects, as Christ did to wicked men, and the wicked one, 'This is your hour, and the power of darkness.' The devil, it is observable, is most busy at the conclusion of a duty, as of prayer, that the Christian might be hindered and distracted, when he closeth up all in the name of Christ, and so all his desires be frustrated; so he is most busy in the conclusion of our days, adding fearful dreams to our slumbers, strong distractions to our fancies, increasing our pains with terrors, driving the good, if possible, to despair, and intoxicating the bad with presumptuous conceits, and all because his time is little: 'The devil is come down, having great rage, knowing that his time is short,' Rev. xii. 12. At the approach of death, through pain of body, and perplexity of mind, men are least able to resist, and therefore this cowardly enemy will then be most ready and fierce to assault. When the Christian is down, then, if possible, he will trample upon him. The last persecutions of the church, under Dioclesian and Maximinian, were the sorest. The last messenger the devil sent to Job, concerning the sudden violent death of all his children, pierced his heart deepest. The subtle serpent reserved that great ordnance for the last, hoping the former small guns, of the loss of his cattle, and estate, and servants, would have done some execution, in making some breach upon his faith and patience; and this great gun playing, when he was before tired in defending, must needs shatter him in pieces. He may fitly be called the wolf of the evening, Jer. v. 6, that devoureth. This roaring lion walketh in the night to seek his prey. There have been few eminent saints but have found their death-bed a bed of thorns, in regard of temptations. Mr Knox said, when he came to die, In my lifetime the devil tempted me to despair, casting my sins in my teeth; but now, in my sickness, he tells me, I have been faithful in the ministry, and so have merited heaven; but blessed be God, who brought those texts into my mind, 'Not I, but the grace of God in me:' 'What hast thou that thou hast not received?' The Israelites never met with so much opposition as when they were to take possession of the land of Canaan; then all the kings of Canaan combined together, and came out and fought them. When Satan was to be cast out of the possessed person, and never to enter into him more, he rent him and tore him, that the people thought he was dead.

Now, reader, what need hast thou to be serious and holy on a dying bed, to the utmost of thine ability, and to fetch in all the

strength thou canst from heaven, when thou hast such cruel powerful enemies to encounter with! It was one of the most quickening, prevalent arguments, that Alexander used to the Macedonians, before their third and last fatal battle with Darius, that they were to fight with all the strength of Persia at once. What an awakening argument should it be to thee, that thou art to fight with all the powers of hell at once!

Secondly, Consider, it is a special season wherein thou mayest glorify God. A saint by his death may bring God more honour than by all his life. The actions and speeches of dying men make a deep impression on the hearts of those that are about them. The wicked themselves, who have mocked at the purity and strictness of the saints' lives, have admired their patience and cheerfulness in their deaths. Though they look on the believer's words in health as savouring of self and sinister ends and humour, and so neglect them; yet when they hear a dying saint commend the love and faithfulness of God, the pleasantness and excellency of his ways and worship, and to bless the time, and pains, and strength, that ever they spent in his service, they esteem his language, and begin to have other thoughts of holiness and heaven; for they consider, that surely now the man is entering upon the borders of eternity, he is serious and in earnest. Hence the patriarchs, knowing the prevalency of such words, urge Joseph with Jacob's dying charge: 'Thy father, when dying, said, Forgive, I pray thee, the iniquity of thy servants,' Gen. l. 16. That Russian that would live with his fellow-rioters, beholding the holy behaviour of Ambrose on his death-bed, would choose to die with Ambrose. The enemies of Christ, beholding at the death of Christ how the rocks were rent, darkness covered the face of the earth; how the veil of the temple was torn in sunder, the graves were opened, the dead raised, were forced to cry out, Doubtless this man was the Son of God. So when the adversaries of God's people see them on their death-beds, and behold their patience in bearing their sickness, their faith in relying on their Saviour, their charity in forgiving their enemies, their zeal for the honour and interest of their Master, their constancy in defending the gospel they did before profess, they are compelled in their consciences to acknowledge, Doubtless these are the servants, the sons and daughters of God. Much more will a holy behaviour on a dying bed benefit such as fear God. It convinceth sinners, that they, whether they will or no, must have other thoughts of holiness and holy men than formerly, and it confirmeth saints in their gracious practices, and makes them more diligent in their preparation.

Mr Bilney, the day before he suffered death, being told that, though the fire was hot, God's Spirit would cool it, to his everlasting refreshing, answered, putting his hand in the flame of the candle, I feel by experience, and have known by philosophy, that fire by God's ordinance is very hot; but yet I am persuaded, by God's holy word, and by the experience of some spoken of therein, that in the flame they felt no heat, and in the fire no consumption; and I constantly believe, howsoever the stubble of this my body shall be wasted by it, yet my soul and spirit shall be purged thereby; a pain for the time, whereon followeth joy unspeakable. And then he most comfortably treated on Isa. xliii. 1, 2, 'But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.' Which words he applied both to himself and his friends then present; of which some reaped such fruit that they caused the words to be fair written on tables. The comfort whereof, in several that were with him, was never taken from them to their dying day. Oh, it is very profitable to others, when a saint so behaveth himself on his death-bed, that he may say to his friends and relations, as Sir Robert Harleigh did to his children, I have formerly taught you how to live, and now I teach you how to die.[1]

Thirdly, Consider, it is the last opportunity that thou shalt ever have to do any work for thy God and Saviour, and thy own soul. When thou diest, thou goest to the place where thou shalt receive thy reward, and shalt never, never more have any season to sow to the Spirit in, to serve thy Redeemer in, and to manifest thy thankfulness to him for his love to thee: 'I must work the work of him that sent me, whilst it is day,' saith Christ, 'for the night cometh, wherein no man can work,' John ix. 4. Thou mayest, when dying, say to thy friends, as the crier of the *Ludi seculares*, which happened but once in a hundred years, did at Rome, Come see that which ye never saw before, nor shall ever see again. He that hath but one arrow to shoot, but one throw to cast, but one opportunity left him to work out his salvation in, may well improve it to the utmost. A certain martyr going to suffer, expressed his sorrow that he was going thither, where he should do his God no more service. Our God is so good, that his work is desirable; and were it possible for any grief in heaven, saith Dr Sibbes, it would arise from a Chris-

[1] Woodriff, Simeon's Song., Epist. Dedicat.

tian's consideration, that he did no more for his God, and that it cost him so little pains and labour to be saved. When Samson was nigh his death, and should have no more opportunities to exalt his God, and advantage his church, he lifted up his heart to heaven, 'Assist me this once, that I may be avenged on the Philistines for my two eyes.' So, reader, when thou enterest thy chamber, and art betaking thyself to thy dying bed, what weighty reasons hast thou to pour out thy soul, and wrestle with God for divine strength! Lord, I am now come, in my own apprehension, to the close of my days, after which, I shall never more enjoy a season to glorify thy Majesty, or further my own account. I am going to do a great work, which I never did before, nor shall ever do again. I acknowledge that I have been guilty of too much slothfulness, and unfaithfulness, in my life, and have given these Philistines, that are enemies to my soul, too much advantage against me, and occasion to mock and deride me. Oh assist me now this once, that I may do thee and thy church some eminent service, that I may be strong in faith, an example of patience, humility, heavenly-mindedness, and charity, and be the death of those uncircumcised ones, my cursed corruptions, and be avenged on them, for all the dishonour they have done to thee, though I die with them.

I come now to shew wherein thou oughtest to exercise thyself to godliness, on a dying bed.

First, In commending God and his ways to others. The words of dying men are living oracles, and do not die with them. It is the unhappiness of worldlings and wicked men, that when they come to die, they cannot commend the work that they have followed, the wages which they have merited, or the master whom they have served; but it is the privilege of Christians, that they have cause to praise the sweetness of that love which they have tasted, the equity of those laws which they have obeyed, the grace, and mercy, and bounty, and faithfulness of that Lord whom they have prayed to, and delighted in, and worshipped, and the vastness, and richness, and certainty, and eternity of that reward which they are going to possess. The men of this earth, when they are dying, do often cry out and complain of the falseness and unfaithfulness of the world, and the flesh, how they have cozened, and cheated, and deceived them; and of their own folly and madness, in toiling and moiling, and drudging night and day, to please and gratify that which now in their extremity turns them off. Oh how should the children of God extol their Father, and his care of them, and kindness to them, magnify their Redeemer, and his passion for them,

and affection to them, exalt the word and ways of the Lord, as those which they have found by experience to be the most comfortable and gainful ways. The last breath of a saint should be spent in his God's service. *Oportet imperatorem stantem mori*, was Vespasian's motto. *Oportet episcopum, concionantem mori*, was holy Jewel's motto. *Oportet Christianum glorificantem Deum mori*, should be every saint's motto.

Dying Jacob will speak highly of God's providence, though he bring it in, as it were, in a parenthesis: 'The God which fed me all my life long to this day,' Gen. xlviii. 15. Dying Joseph will praise the Lord's faithfulness to his promise, and pawn his body for its performance: 'I die; and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence,' Gen. l. 24, 25. Dying Moses ascribes greatness to his God, tells the Israelites, 'He is the Rock, his work is perfect; all his ways are judgments; a God of truth, and without iniquity; just and right is he,' Deut. xxxii. 3, 4. Dying Joshua will appeal to the consciences of his hearers, whether God had not kept touch with them to the least tittle: 'I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts, and in all your souls, that not one good thing hath failed of all that the Lord our God hath spoken,' Joshua xxiii. 14. As Moses and Joshua did sound forth the praises of their God, so also, when dying, they did persuade and exhort the Jews to godliness, Deut. xxxii. 23; Joshua xxiii. *per tot.* So Paul, meeting with those Ephesian elders, that should see his face no more, doth solemnly charge them to take heed to the flocks, over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers.

I remember, saith Senarclæus, concerning Alphonsus Diazius, his friend and bed-fellow, when he and I were at Neuberg, the night before he was murdered, he prayed before he went to bed more ardently, and somewhat longer than ordinary; after which he spent a good part of the night in discourse concerning the works of God, and exhorting me to the practice of true piety; and truly, I found myself so inflamed, when I heard him, that I thought I heard the Spirit of God speaking to me.

Mr Knox gave good advice to all his visitors; among the rest, the Earl of Morton came to see him, to whom he thus spake: My lord, God hath given you many blessings—wisdom, riches, and many great friends, and now is about to prefer you to the government of the realm. (The Earl of Mar, the late regent, being newly dead.)

In his name I charge you, use these blessings better than formerly you have done; seeking first the glory of God, the furtherance of the gospel, the good of his church and ministers. Be careful of the king, to procure his good, and the welfare of his realm. If you do thus, God will be with you, and honour you; if otherwise, he will deprive you of all these honours, and your end shall be shame and ignominy. These words the earl called to mind nine years after, at the time of his execution, saying, that he had found John Knox a true prophet.

Mr Ignatius Jordan, of Exeter,[1] one famous in his generation for godliness, was observed, in his sickness, to take all occasions to exhort others to constancy in the truth, zeal for God, and to make sure of heaven; and when the mayor of the city sent to visit him, he said to the messenger, Remember me to Mr Mayor, and tell him from me, that he make sure of heaven, be careful to do justice, and provide for the poor.

We should, when dying, in a special manner mind this work of commending God and godliness to our relations, 1 Chron. xxviii. 1, 8, 9, *vide;* they are more affected than others with our sickness, and so also with our sayings. Our counsel may probably do them good, when we are turned into corruption. Jacob calleth his children together to bless them; David layeth a strict command on his son Solomon: 'And thou, Solomon my son, know the God of thy fathers, and serve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind.' Cyrus, upon his death-bed, conjures his sons to peace, lest they should lose the kingdom he left his heir. The saint must conjure his children to purity in the first place, lest they lose their souls and the kingdom of heaven. Mr Robert Bolton, on his death-bed, called his children together, wished them to remember the counsel he had formerly given them, and he verily believed none of them durst meet him at the great tribunal in an unregenerate estate.

Mr Sanders, a little before his death, in a letter to his wife, writeth thus: Dear wife, riches I have none to leave behind me, wherewith to endow thee, after this world's manner, but the treasure of tasting how sweet Christ is unto hungry consciences (whereof I thank my Christ I feel part, and would feel more) I bequeath to thee, and to the rest of my beloved in Christ, to retain the same in sense of heart always.[2] Oh, how pathetically, how earnestly, should dying Christians, who know somewhat of the worth of grace and holiness, and of the evil and end of sin and sinners, persuade

[1] Mr Nicols in his relation of the life and death of Ignatius Jordan.

[2] Foxe, Martyr., vol. iii. p. 138.

their children and relations to love, and fear, and serve the Lord, when it is the last time that ever they shall advise or counsel them. How hard should they woo, that the souls of their kindred may be married to Christ.

Secondly, In commending thyself and others to God by prayer. When the body breathes shortest, it breathes quickest. Though the Christian on his death-bed may want strength for long solemn devotion, his short ejaculations should be both fervent and frequent. The first thing a child of God doth, when new born, is to breathe, to pray, Acts ix. 11. And it is one of the last things he doth, Acts vii. 60. He entereth praying into the place of praise. Paul the hermit was found dead, saith Jerome,[1] with his hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, that the dead corpse seemed to pray. *Demus operam ut moriamur in precatione;* Let us endeavour to die at prayer, saith Augustine.[2]

1. The sick man should pray especially for himself. Lord Jesus receive my spirit, saith Stephen; Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit, saith Christ; Lord, saith dying Beza, perfect that which thou hast begun, that I suffer not shipwreck in the haven. Children desire to die in their father's bosom, or on their mother's lap. Mr Perkins died begging remission of sin, and entreating mercy at God's hands. Bishop Usher was often heard to desire the like end that Mr Perkins had; which he obtained; for the last words which he was heard to utter were, But, Lord, in special forgive my sins of omission; not long after which he expired. Luther's prayer, a little before his death, or rather thanksgiving, was, *Pater mi cœlestis, Deus et Pater Domini nostri Jesu Christi, ago tibi gratias quod filium tuum Jesum Christum mihi revelasti, cui credidi, quem sum professus, quem amavi,*[3] &c.; My heavenly Father, the God and Father of my Lord Jesus Christ, I thank thee for revealing thy Son Jesus Christ to me, whom I have believed, whom I have professed, whom I have loved.

Others must not be forgotten by us, but our own souls must in a special manner be remembered. Bellarmine tells us[4] of a desperate advocate in the court of Rome, who, being exhorted on his death-bed to pray to God for mercy, made this speech, Lord, I have a word to say to thee, not for myself—*Ego enim propero ad inferos: neque enim est ut aliquid pro me agas*—for I am hastening to hell, neither is there anything that I would beg on my own behalf, but for my wife and children. This he spake, saith Bellarmine, who

[1] Jer. in Vit.
[2] Melc. Adam.
[3] Aug. de ve. invo., cap. 33.
[4] Bellar. de Arte Mor., lib. ii. cap. 19.

was then present, as boldly as if he had been taking his journey only to some neighbouring village.

2. For his relations. The more hot our affection is to any, the more fervent our petitions should be for them.[1] Praying parents are the most loving parents. When dying, chiefly they should bless their children in the name of the Lord. So Isaac did, Gen. xxviii. 1; thus Jacob, Gen. xlviii. 15, 16. Godly parents may plead the covenant made to them and theirs, unto God, on their dying beds with comfort. They are best acquainted with their children's conditions, conversations, wants, weaknesses, and so fittest to open their cases to God, and to beseech grace on their behalves, that they may be a holy seed, a generation arising to shew forth his praise. Christ, when nigh death, committed his spiritual children to his Father, and earnestly begged his care of them, and favour for them: 'Holy Father, I come to thee; I am no more in the world, but these are in the world; keep them through thy name, keep them from evil, sanctify them through thy truth.' So should a godly father, or mother, when dying: Lord, I am leaving my poor children in the midst of snares, and temptations, and miseries, Ruth i. 8, and ii. 19; 2 Tim. i. 18. I am coming out of the world to thy Majesty, where I shall be above all frights and fears, and beyond all malice and mischief; but my children are in the world, and will daily be environed with allurements and affrightments, with assaults and batteries, from their spiritual enemies; thou knowest the power and policy of the world and the wicked one, the treachery and deceitfulness of the flesh within them, and their weakness and inability to wrestle with, and overcome the flatteries of the world, and the suggestions of the devil. Oh, keep them through thy name, that they may look beyond the world, live above the world, and expect and eye their portion and happiness in a better world. Though they live in the world, let them not live as the world, but walk all their days as heirs of another world. Keep them from the evil of sin, however it please thy Majesty to deal with them about the evil of suffering. Give them the shield of faith, whereby they may quench the fiery darts of the devil. Let thy covenant of grace be their portion, thy love their cordial, and thy mansion-house their eternal possession. Be thou their Father, to direct, protect, govern, and provide for them, and give them a name in thy house, better than of sons and daughters. Oh sanctify

[1] I have read of one that used to pray, God bless my father and mother, brethren and sisters, and none else; to whom one that heard him answered, It were better the devil had thy father and mother, and brethren and sisters, and none else.

them through thy truth, that they may be saved, and may meet me with joy at the great day! Luther, when dying, made this will for his wife, great with child, and his little sons: O Lord God, I thank thee, that thou wouldst have me to be poor in this world; I have no house, land, or money that I should leave them. Thou hast given me wife and children, I restore them to thee. Do thou, O Father of orphans, and judge of widows, nourish, teach, keep them, as thou hast hitherto me.

3. For the whole church of God. It is good to pray by ourselves, but it is ill to pray only for ourselves.[1] When we are dying, and going to the church triumphant, we should be sure to put up some requests for the poor members of Christ, and the church militant. Calvin was heard before his death often to sigh out, How long, Lord, how long will it be ere thou avenge the blood of thy servants? The people of God are the purchase of Christ, and of the same family and body with the dying Christian, and therefore must needs be dear to him.

4. For his benefactors, and those that have done good to him and his, Ruth i. 8, and ii. 19. Paul had received some kindness from Onesimus;[2] he refreshed him in his bonds, and in 2 Tim. i. 18, which was the last of his epistles, and thought to be written but a little before his death, for he tells us in it, 'I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand,' how pathetically doth he pray for him! 'The Lord grant that he may find mercy at that day.'

5. For our enemies. This is to follow God's pattern, who doth good for evil, and to obey his precept, who commandeth us to pray for them that despitefully use us. Stephen, when departing out of the world, entreats mercy for them who were cruel to him: 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge,' Acts vii. 60. Our blessed Saviour dying, begs hard for their eternal lives who were the instruments and authors of his bloody death: 'Father, forgive them; they know not what they do,' Luke xxiii. 34.

Thirdly, In a holy exercise of faith, courage, repentance, charity, and patience.

1. Faith. It is the character of God's children that they live by faith, and they die in the faith, Hab. ii. 6; Heb. xi. 31. The water, say some, of the pool of Bethesda (wherein the priest washed the sacrifices before he offered them) was of a reddish colour, to note that men must be washed by faith in the blood of Christ, be-

[1] Si pro te solo oras, pro te solus orabis; si pro omnibus rogas, omnes pro te rogabunt.—*Amb.*

[2] Onesiphorus.—ED.

fore they are ready to be offered a peace-offering to God by death. The dying Christian must expect strong assaults against the bulwark of his faith; but whatever he let go, he must keep his hold on Christ. I know no grace that the devil is such a sworn enemy to as faith, and I know no season that he is more diligent in to overthrow their faith, than when they are under some dangerous sickness; therefore it is the observation of a good man, that he seldom seeth a sick saint, followed close with temptations, to recover of that sickness; for Satan, knowing he hath but a little time, useth all his craft and strength to separate the soul from the Rock of his salvation. Upon a dying bed, reflect upon former experiences of God's love to thy soul, and recollect the former evidences of thy title to Christ, and thereby to heaven. I must tell thee, though the certainty of thy salvation depend upon the truth of thy faith, the comfort of thy dissolution will depend on the strength of thy faith. Faith is the shield of the soul, and therefore, above all, in thy encounter with thy great enemy Satan, and thy last enemy death, take the shield of faith, Eph. vi. 14. Epaminondas, after his victory at Leuctrum, wherein he was mortally wounded, understanding that his buckler was safe, bade his chirurgeon boldly to pluck out the dart that stuck in his side, and died cheerfully. The saint, the soldier of Christ, who is wounded even to death, and keepeth his shield of faith safe, may leave the world with courage. The apostle Paul, who knew whom he had believed, 2 Tim. i. 12, rings a challenge in the ears of death: 'O death, where is thy sting?' and sings a triumphant ditty at the approach of death: 'The time of my departure is at hand, I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness,' 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. When Jacob had believed the report of Joseph's life, his heart was revived. 'Is Joseph yet alive?' saith he; 'I will go down and see him before I die.' When the true Israelite can firmly credit the testimony which God hath given of Jesus, the son of Joseph, how he, being an enemy, was reconciled to God by the death of his Son, and shall much more, being reconciled, be saved by his life, and by faith can cling on him, his heart, though dying, is then enlivened. Oh with what comfort can he take his journey into the other world! When Philip viewed his young son Alexander, Now, saith he, I am content to die. Old Simeon springs young again at a sight of Christ; and having embraced his Saviour in the arms of faith, as well as in the arms of his body, he begs a dismission out of this valley of tears, being assured thereby of an admission into fulness of joy:

'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace (ἀπολύεις), according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.' Having with an eye of faith beheld Christ, he counts his life but a bondage, and desires to depart or be loosed from fetters, as the word signifieth, and is taken, Mat. xxvii. 17. We read of the Lord's worthies, that by faith they stopped the mouths of lions. Death is a fierce and cruel lion, but faith will pull out its teeth, that it cannot hurt us; or stop its mouth, that it shall not devour us. This grace, like the angel sent from heaven when Daniel was cast into the lions' den, will save the Christian from being torn in pieces.

O friend, the robes of Christ's righteousness is the only coat of mail which can defend thy soul against the shot of death. If thou canst with Moses go up to Pisgah, and take a view by faith of the land of promise, thou wilt comfortably, with him, lay down thine earthly tabernacle. Job desired death as eagerly as the labourer in a hot summer's day desires the shadow; Paul longed for it as vehemently as the apprentice for the expiration of his indentures; and all because they had first beheld Christ by faith. It is no wonder that many of God's children have called earnestly to be laid to bed, knowing that it would prove their everlasting happy rest; and when their bodies are carried by mortal men to their mother earth, their souls should be conveyed by glorious angels to their Father in heaven.

2. Courage. A Christian should be a volunteer in death. Many of the martyrs were as willing to die as to dine; went to the fire as cheerfully as to a feast, and courted its pale and ghastly countenance as if it had been a beautiful bride. When King Lysimachus threatened Cyrenæus Theodorus with hanging:[1] *Istis quæso (inquit) ista horribilia minitare purpuratis tuis; Theodori quidem nihil interest, humine an sublime putrescat:* Threaten these terrible things to thy brave courtiers; Theodorus cares not whether he rot in the air or on the earth. Cyprian said amen to his own sentence of martyrdom. Jerome reports of Nepotianus, that he gave up his life so cheerfully, that one would have thought he rather walked forth than died. When Ignatius was led from Syria to Rome, to be torn in pieces of wild beasts, he often wished by the way that he were in the midst of those beasts that were to devour him, and that their appetites might be whetted to despatch him; fearing lest it should happen to him, as to some others, that the lions, out of a kind of reverence, would not dare to approach them, being ready, he said, rather to provoke them to fight, than that they should

[1] Cic. Quæst. Tusc., lib. i.

suffer him to escape. Bradford being told by his keeper's wife that his chain was a-buying, and he was to die the next day, pulled off his hat, and thanked God for it. When some wondered that Adam Damplip could eat his food so well, when his end was so near, he told them, Ah, masters, do you think that I have been God's prisoner so long in the Marshalsea, and have not yet learned to die? Yes, yes, and I doubt not but God will strengthen me therein. Anne Askew subscribed her confession in Newgate thus: Written by me, Anne Askew, that neither wisheth for death, nor feareth his might, and as merry as one that is bound towards heaven. Indeed it is said of a wicked man that his soul is required of him, and that God takes away his soul, Luke xii.; Job xxvii. 10; but of a godly man, that he giveth up the ghost, and he cometh to his grave, Gen. xxv. 8; Job iv. 21. Nature will teach the heathen that death is the end of all outward miseries to all men, hence some of them drank of its cup with as much constancy and courage as if it had been the most pleasant julep; but grace will teach the Christian that death is not only a remedy against all his bodily and spiritual maladies—as Sir Walter Raleigh said of the sharp axe that should behead him, This will cure all my infirmities—but also an inlet into fulness of joy and felicity. Reverend Deering said on his death-bed, I feel such joy in my spirit, that if I should have the sentence of life on the one side, and the sentence of death on the other side, I had rather a thousand times choose the sentence of death, since God hath appointed a separation, than the sentence of life. Titus Vespasian, the mirror of mankind, being a stranger to Christ, was very unwilling to leave the world; being carried in a horse litter, and knowing that he must die, looked up to heaven, and complained pitifully that his life should be taken from him, who had not desired[1] to die, having never committed any sin, as he said, but only one. Socrates, and some of the wiser heathen, comforted themselves against the fear of death with this weak cordial, that it is common to men, the way of all the earth. Hence it was, when the Athenians condemned Socrates to die, he received the sentence with an undaunted spirit, and told them they did nothing but what nature had before ordained for him. But the Christian hath a greater ground for a holy resolution, and a stronger cordial against the fear of death, even his hopes of eternal life; and surely, if he that exceeds others in his cordials be excelled by them in courage, he disgraceth his physician. Aristippus told the sailors, who wondered that he was not, as well as they, afraid in the storm,

[1] Qu., 'deserved'?—ED.

Ye fear the torments due to a wicked life, and I expect the reward of a good one. It is no marvel that they who lived wickedly should die unwillingly, being frighted with the guilt of their past sins, and with the fears of their future torments. Therefore the Holy Ghost saith of such a one, 'The wicked is driven away in his wickedness,' Prov. xiv. 32, as a beast that is driven out of his den to the slaughter, or as a debtor driven by the officers out of his house, wherein he lay warm, and was surrounded with all sorts of comfort, to a nasty, loathsome prison; but that the righteous, who hath hope in his death, should even die almost with fear of it beforehand, is matter of wonder. Lot's soul is exceedingly vexed with Sodom, yet he is not loath to leave it. This world is a wilderness, a purgatory, a step-mother, a persecutor to all the saints, and yet some of them, when called to leave it, sing loath to depart, and would linger behind; partly from nature, which dreads a dissolution, and partly from the weakness of grace. To fear death much argueth sometimes wickedness, always weakness.

3. Repentance. It is said of St Augustine, that he died with tears in his eyes, in the practice of repentance; and Posidonius saith of him, that he heard him often say in his health, that it was the fittest disposition for dying Christians and ministers.[1] *Laudatos*, saith he, *Christianos et sacerdotes absque digna et competenti pœnitentia exire de corpore non debere.* We die groaning in regard of our bodies, why should not our souls sigh that ever they sinned against so good a God? Beasts bite their enemies with more venom and indignation, when they are ready to die; *Maxime mortiferi solent esse morsus morientium animalium.* The Christian should give sin his most deadly bite, his greatest abhorrency, and grief, and shame, when he is dying, and shall never see sin, or sorrow, or shame more. As it is noble and excellent to die forgiving sinners, so also taking revenge upon sin. Moses, a little before his death, is commanded to avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites, and then he is gathered to his people, Num. xxxi. 1, 2. Samuel takes vengeance on Agag, when he was old, and knew not the day of his death; David could not die with comfort, till he had charged Solomon to execute that justice on Joab which he had omitted. The last time the judge seeth the felon, he passeth sentence of death upon him. Oh, how should the soul of a dying saint be inflamed with anger against sin, when he considers the rich love that it abuseth, the glorious name that it dishonoureth, the blessed Saviour that it pierceth, and that vast happiness which he is going

[1] Posidon. in Vit. Augustini.

to possess, of which, without infinite grace and mercy, it had deprived him. Some persons, when they have been to take their last revenge on their enemies, have done it to purpose. The believer, on his dying bed, takes his last revenge on sin; he shall never have another opportunity to shew his love to his God and Saviour in his spite at, and hatred of, sin; therefore then he should do it to purpose, as dying Samson put forth all his strength, and beg divine help, that he may utterly destroy it, and be avenged on it, for all the defilement and bondage it hath brought on his soul, and dishonour to his Saviour. Dying Jacob cursed the sins of his own sons: 'Cursed be their wrath, for it was fierce; and their anger, for it was cruel; O my soul, enter not thou into their secrets.' The dying child of God should curse his passions, his pride, his unbelief, his selfishness, even all his lusts, for disobeying such righteous laws, and displeasing such a gracious Lord. When David Chrytæus lay a-dying, he lift up his head from his pillow to hear the discourses of his friends that sat by him, saying, I shall die with the more comfort, if I can die learning something. The Christian, both by his painful sickness, and approaching death, may learn something of the evil of sin, and certainly he may die with the more comfort, (for godly sorrow and joy may be contemporaries, as the heaven shine and shower at the same time,) if he die in a flood of tears for his unkindness to Christ.

4. Charity in a double respect.

(1.) In forgiving them that have wronged thee. If the natural sun should not go down upon our wrath, much less should the sun of our lives. It is bad to bear anger or malice one hour in our hearts against any, but it is worst of all to carry it with us into the other world. How can he expect to die in peace with God, who dieth in war with men, when God himself hath said, 'Except ye forgive others their trespasses against you, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses'? Amilcar, the father of Hannibal, when he was dying, made his son take a solemn oath to maintain a perpetual war with the Romans. Edward the First adjured his son and nobles, that if he died in his expedition against Bruce, king of Scotland, they should not inter his corpse, but carry it about with them till they had avenged him on that usurper. But certainly it is a desperate thing to leave children heirs to the parent's wrath and rage, as well as to his riches. Oh how dreadful is his estate, who takes his enemy by the throat, when God by death is taking him by the throat, and ready to throttle him for ever. If thou hast wronged others, either in name, or goods, or body,

seek reconciliation, and make satisfaction; for this is righteous and just. If thy brother hath aught against thee, thou hast never more need of reconciling thyself to him, than when thou art approaching the altar of death, there to offer up the last sacrifice to God in this world. If thy brother have wronged thee in any sort, remit it—this is charity; to do otherwise, is to give place to the devil, Eph. iv. 16, 17, and thou hast least cause to give him ground when his rage is greatest, and his batteries strongest, in thy last conflict with him. Oh imitate that blessed martyr Stephen, and the incomparable Saviour, in begging God's love for them who hate thee! Acts vii. 60; Luke xxiii. 34.

(2.) In remembering the poor and afflicted, if God hath made thee able. It is best to be merciful in our lifetime, to make our own hand our executors, and our own eyes our overseers, for the payment of our gifts and legacies to our spiritual kindred; for such have a particular promise that God will make all their bed in their sickness. But it is good to be charitable when we are dying; true friends shew most love at parting. Though justice must be blind, not to see persons, yet charity must be quick-sighted, to pick out the fittest objects, viz., the poor, and the pious poor in the first place. Our goods will not extend to God, therefore they must to the saints. When Jonathan was beyond the reach of David's charity, he doth for his sake manifest it to his son. God is beyond all our gifts, therefore for his sake we must bestow them on the godly, that are his children: 'Make you friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when that faileth, ye may be received into the everlasting habitations.' Hereby men lay up a good foundation against the time of need. Godly parents are ignorant how their children may employ the estate they leave, whether as fuel for corruption, or as oil to keep the lamps in God's sanctuary burning. It is good therefore for themselves with prudence to dispose of what they may to God's servants and service.

Some men have estates dropping on them out of the clouds, as it were; large inheritances, fair patrimonies, like Canaan, both in regard of their fruitfulness, and abounding with all sorts of comforts, and in regard of their easiness of obtaining them without sweat or labour. They inherit, as the Israelites, houses which they built not, wells which they digged not, and vineyards which they planted not; upon both these accounts, such persons are engaged to do good, and distribute, and to be rich in good works. God expects a return of his talents with advantage. How liberal, nay, lavish, have many papists been upon their death-beds, to friars and

monks, even to the wronging their wives and children, that some states, as Venice, have been forced to make laws to restrain men, lest the church should in time swallow up all the revenues of the commonwealth, and all this upon a foolish, vain conceit, that they should the sooner pass through purgatory. It is certainly a great disgrace to the disciples of Christ, and no mean dishonour to Christ himself, that so many, and such large gifts, have proceeded from the false faith of merit-mongers, when the faith of his most glorious gospel doth not work the like in true believers. How will Christians answer it, that an idle dream, and fancied fear of an imaginary purgatory, should do more than the sure persuasion of the love of God, and the certain hope of eternal life?

(4.) Patience and submission to the will of God, both as to our death or life, and also as to our pain or ease in sickness. As to our life and death, we must know God is wise, and will never gather his fruit but in the best season. None, unless a fool, but will be willing God should choose for him. It is excellent for a sick person to be wholly at God's disposal, as knowing that whilst he is here God will refresh him with the first-fruits, and when he goeth hence, receive him into that place where he shall enjoy the whole harvest. It was the speech of dying Julian, He that would not die when he must, and he that would die when he must not, are both of them cowards alike. To desire to live, when one is called to die, is a sign of cowardice; for such a one is afraid to enter the list with the king of terrors. To desire to die, when one is called to live, speaks a faint-hearted creature; for such a man dares not look an affliction or disaster in the face, therefore would take shelter in death. Cato, Cleombrotus, Lucretia, shewed more cowardice than courage in being their own executioners. The Romans commended Terentius for his resolution to live after his army was routed by Hannibal. He is the most valiant person that can die willingly when God would have him die, and live as willingly when God would have him live. He that is weary of his work before the evening is an unprofitable servant, and is either infected with idleness or with diseases. When Dr Whitaker was told death was approaching, he answered, Life or death is welcome to me, which God pleaseth. Mr Robert Bolton being told that it would be better for the church of God if God pleased to spare his life, said, If I shall find favour in the eyes of God, he will bring me again, and shew me both it and his habitation; if not, lo here I am, let him do with me what he pleaseth. Another pious soul in his sickness cried out, *Domine, si tibi sim necessarius, non recuso*

vivere, Lord, if I may be further serviceable to thee, I am willing to live. Lucius Cornelius, lieutenant in Portugal under Fabius the consul, was infamous to following ages for his impatience in complaining of his physician, and railing at Æsculapius for not accepting his vow and passionate desire of having his life spun out to a longer thread.[1] We cannot blame them who have their portion in this life for their unwillingness to leave it, and to become beggars in hell for ever. *Mori timeat qui ad secundam mortem de hac morte transibit*, saith Cyprian, de Moral., Let him fear death who must pass from this death to the second death. To such a one, indeed, death is a murderer; like Jehoram's messenger, comes to take away the life of his soul and all his happiness, and therefore he may well call, as Elisha did, Shut the door, and keep him out.

Many saints who died violent and cruel deaths yet gave their very enemies cause to admire their patience. They wearied out their bloody persecutors by their meekness and patience. Bonner said of the martyrs in Queen Mary's days, A vengeance on them; I think they love to burn. When that old disciple, Polycarp, came to the stake at which he was burnt to death, he desired to stand untied, saying, Let me alone; for he that gave me strength to come to the fire will give me patience to endure the flame without your tying. Cassianus, with admirable meekness, suffered a cruel martyrdom from his own scholars, who, at the command of the barbarous tyrant, became his executioners, some with their pen-knives pricking and lancing his flesh, others casting stones at him, till they had killed him. Eulalia, a chaste virgin of a noble family in Portugal, being for a time kept close by her parents, for fear her bold profession should cause her death, one night getting from them, and appearing before the tribunal of Maximinus, she was, for refusing to sacrifice to his idols, executed in this manner: first, two hangmen, with all their might, rent her joints in sunder, then her flesh was scratched from her sides with the talons of wild beasts, and hot burning torches were set to her sides, which ended her life.

A Christian should also exercise patience and submission to God's will under his pain. It is the rule of Hippocrates, that that sickness is most dangerous in which the sick man alters his countenance. Undoubtedly it is ill and unbecoming Christianity, when men who in health are mild and meek, in sickness are altered to be peevish

[1] L. Cornelius, legatus sub Fabio Consule. Vividam naturam et virilem animam servavi, quoad animam efflavi; et tandem desertus ope medicorum et Æsculapii Dei ingrati, cui me voveram, sodalem perpetuo futurum, si fila aliquantulum optata protulisset.—*Epitaph.*

and passionate; that their relations and attendants, who pity their pain, and pray for their ease, and watch and work night and day to serve them, are requited with harsh words and fretful returns. Caius Marius suffered the veins of his legs to be cut out for the cure of his gout, and never shrunk for it. The Grecians were cowardly in their encounters with men, but valiant and patient in their conflicts with diseases. Master Jeremiah Whitaker, who on his death-bed had dreadful fits of the stone, bore them with marvellous patience, often turning up his eyes to heaven, and saying, Blessed be God this is not hell. The saint who is in covenant with God, and hath engaged himself to God to submit to all his providences, and hath God engaged to him to lay no more upon him than he will enable him to bear, may well with patience endure the divine pleasure.

Vincentius, a Spaniard, who was martyred at Valence under Dacianus, the president of the cruel tyrant Dioclesian, was used in this manner: first he was laid upon the rack, and all the joints of his body distended till they cracked again; then all the members of his body were pierced and indented with deadly wounds; then they vexed and tore his flesh with iron combs sharply filed; then they laid his body on an iron grate, and when they had opened his flesh with iron hooks, they seared it with fiery plates, sprinkling the same with hot burning salt; last of all, they cast him into a vile dungeon, the floor whereof was first thick spread with the sharpest shells that might be gotten, his feet then being fast locked in the stocks, there he was left alone till he died—all which he endured without murmuring or complaining—and, according to his name, (Vincentius,) was over all a conqueror. And shall not Christians, who die in their beds in peace, with much less pain, be patient! Many who knew not God did look on death as a favour, and one of the greatest which their gods could bestow on them. Agamedes and Trophonius, having built the temple of Apollo, asked of that god a reward for their services.[1] They were answered, that within seven days they should be bountifully paid for their pains; at the end of which time they died in a sleep. One of Cæsar's crazed soldiers desired the favour of the emperor to have leave to kill himself.

Especially, the thoughts of the happy issue of the most painful sickness and death to a child of God may, as the wood thrown into the bitter waters of Marah, make them sweet unto him. Some choose to be cut rather than to be daily tortured with the stone,

[1] Plut. ad Apol.

though they know that cutting will put them to much pain, because they hope that cutting will cure them of their distemper. When a jailer knocks off a prisoner's fetters and bolts, though it puts him to much more pain than the constant wearing them, though every blow goeth to his heart, yet he flincheth not, he complaineth not, because he knoweth his future ease will make amends for his present pain. Christians are here fettered with sin and misery, which constantly grate upon their spirits. Death is the jailer to knock off their shackles, and let them into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. What though it put them to much pain; they may bear it with much patience, knowing that it will end in eternal pleasures.

Though a hypocrite, like a piece of brass, when stricken with the hammer of sickness or death, maketh a sharp and irksome noise with impatience, and breaketh in pieces, is undone for ever, yet the sincere soul, as a piece of gold, when so smitten, may sound sweetly and be pliable. True gold may be stretched out in length and breadth, in thin and fine leaves, as you please.

Now, reader, that thou mayest thus glorify thy God, credit thy profession, further thine account, and advantage others by thy death; it is requisite that thou be always ready for it. The quarter-day never comes amiss to him that hath always his rent ready by him. The loving husband, let him come when he will, is ever welcome to a faithful spouse. The actual unpreparedness of some holy persons hath caused their petitions for a longer stay when God seemed to call them hence, Ps. xxxix. 13. As a nobleman who is a loyal subject, and affectionately desires his prince's presence and company at his house, may wish that it may be deferred when his house is out of repairs, till it is in a better order. The habitual unpreparedness of sinners—I mean, their predominant impenitency and unbelief—hath made death cutting to them indeed. The pismire fears not the winter, having laid in her provision against that season; but the grasshopper, being unprepared, is starved therein.

Let thy whole life be but a preparation for death. He that would die but once—I mean, escape the second death—must die daily, live in a constant expectation of it, and preparation for it. Pliny calleth a sudden death the greatest fortune of a man's life. Julius Cæsar, the day before his death, in discourse with Marius Lepidus upon that point, what was the best end of a man's life, preferred that which was sudden and unlooked for, which was his fate the next day. Augustus, his successor, was of the same judgment, and desired *mortem celerem, et insperatam;* but the Christian findeth by experience that death to be the best which was most expected

and prepared for. *Meditatio mortis, vita perfectissima*, The meditation of death is the holiest life, saith the father. *Tota vita, meditatio mortis, et discendum est mori*, The whole life is but a learning to die, saith the philosopher. Wise princes lay up ten years for one day's battle. A wise Christian will lay up every day somewhat for his last day, knowing that if he win that combat, he is made for ever. Invasions or insurrections, like a sudden breach of the sea, carry all before them, when pitched battles give equal advantage, and cause less terror on each side. Evils premeditated are often prevented, always mitigated, the mind gathering reason and strength together wherewith to encounter them. But unthought-of troubles, like fire in the night, are most frightful, startling the secure sinner from his quiet repose.

In order to this preparation, I shall mention two or three particulars, but briefly, having spoken to them elsewhere.

1. Keep a clear conscience in thy health. Remember that sin is the sting of death; therefore be afraid of sin, if thou wouldst not be afraid of death. It was Nero's answer to Seneca, when he advised him to desist his wicked courses, that he might please the gods, *Vereor ego deos, cum talia facio*, Do you think I fear the gods, who dare run upon such actions! But he who did not dread the gods found death dreadful to him; for the historian observeth that he cried pitifully, like a child, when he was called forth to be killed. It is the righteous only that is bold as a lion, because the righteous only hath a conscience sprinkled with the blood of the Lamb, and a conscience void of offence towards God and man. When Hilarion was nigh death, Depart, my soul, saith he, depart; what dost thou fear? Thou hast served Christ almost seventy years, and art thou afraid of death?[1] Bernard observeth of Gerrard, I beheld him, *exultantem in morte hominem, et insultantem morti*, exulting in death, and insulting over death. St Ambrose undauntedly encountered his last enemy, saying, I have not so lived that I am afraid to live any longer, neither do I fear to die, because we have a good Lord. The testimony of a good conscience was the great apostle's comfort in the midst of his trials and troubles, 2 Cor. i. 12. It is guilt which makes us shy of a severe and holy God's presence.

It is no marvel that Alexander the Conqueror was struck almost dead at the sight of Cyrus's tomb; that Sigismund, when dying,

[1] Hilarion morti proximus dixisse fertur, Egredere anima mea, Egredere; quid dubitas? Septuaginta prope annos serviisti Christo, et mortem times?—*Jer. Epist. Fam.*, lib. iii., *et in Vit.*

should forbid his servants to mention the word death; that Louis the Eleventh should, while in health, enjoin his courtiers not to speak of death, and when sick, prohibit the naming it upon pain of death. I do not wonder that Saul, upon the news of his approaching danger and death, falls grovelling on the ground, and hath no strength left in him; nor that Belshazzar, upon the tidings of this sergeant's coming to arrest him, fell into an ague, quaking and shivering so violently, that all the wine which he drank so plentifully in his golden bowls could not cheer his heart, nor fetch blood into his cheeks. The malefactor may well dread the thoughts, much more the approach, of an assize, knowing that he is bound over to it, and must appear to be arraigned, condemned, and executed. The entry of death may well be forcible upon them whom it ejects out of all their happiness, and whose lives have been made up of unholiness. It is vice that paints death with such a formidable countenance, with a whip and flames in its hand. Friend, let thy conversation be pious, if thou wouldst die in peace.

Such as a man's life is, usually such is his death. An unholy life is ordinarily followed with an unhappy end. A filthy adulterer, mentioned by Luther, expired in the arms of a harlot. So also Tigellinus, Cornelius, Gallus, Ladislaus, king of Naples. One of the popes died in the embraces of strange flesh. A great swearer, when he came to die, saith Mr Bolton, swore apace, and as if he had been already in hell, called upon the standers-by to help him, with oaths. King Henry the Second on his death-bed cursed his sons, the day wherein he was born, and in that distemper departed the world, saith the historian, which himself had so often distempered. We read of one who lived well, that died ill; and of but one in the whole book of God who lived ill, that died well. A sinner may presume upon peace at death, and bespeak, in the language of Jehoram to Jehu, 'Is it peace, Jehu?' Is it peace, death? Or as the elders to Samuel, 'Comest thou peaceably?' But the answer will be the same with that of Jehu to him, 'What peace can there be so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?' What peace can there be so long as thy lusts, and atheism, and ignorance, and profaneness abound, and thy abominations are so many? It is no wonder that such persons, like owls, are never heard but at night, the close of their days, and then they screech horribly. What shall we call a mocking of God, saith a learned person,[1] if they do not mock him who think it enough to ask him forgiveness at leisure, with the last drawing of a malicious breath?

[1] Sir W. Rawley's Ep. Hist. World.

These find out a new god, make one, a leaden one, like Louis the Eleventh of France. And again, let us not flatter our immortal souls to neglect God all our lives, and know that we neglect him, trusting upon the peace we think to make at parting; for this is no other than a rebellious presumption, and a contemptuous laughing to scorn, and a deriding of God, his laws, and precepts.[1] Unquestionably such will be grossly mistaken at last, in falling from their heights into hell. As the daughter of Polycrates dreamed that her father was lifted up, that Jupiter washed him, and the sun anointed him; but it proved to him but a sad prosperity; for, after a long life and large prosperity, he was surprised by his enemies, and hanged up till the dew of heaven wet his cheeks, and the sun melted his grease.

Reader, let me bespeak thee, as Jotham did the men of Shechem, 'Hearken unto me, that God may hearken unto you;' hearken unto me in this day of thy health and life, that God may hearken unto thee in the day of thy sickness and death. Make thy peace with God now, give a bill of divorce to sin, strike a hearty covenant with Christ, keep thy conscience clean every day; allow not thyself in any known sin, if thou wouldst leave this world in favour with God, in the love of good men, and to thy eternal gain. *Nihil est in morte quod metuamus, si nihil timendum vita commisit*, saith the ancient; Death hath nothing frightful, but what a profane life makes so. They who fly from the holiness of God in life, may well fear the justice of God at death. A sinner, indeed, is every day carrying more fagots to that pile in which he must burn for ever, and always twisting those cords with which devils will eternally scourge him; and therefore the guilt of his wicked life, and fear of his dreadful wages, may well represent death to him in a frightful vizard. But he who makes it his constant business to please his Maker, to mortify his earthly members, to crucify the flesh, to serve the will of God in his generation, and to dress his soul against the coming of the bridegroom, shall find his latter end comfortable, and the day of his death better than the day of his birth. O friend, if thou wouldst die comfortably, live conscientiously! A happy death is the conclusion of a holy life; God hath joined them together, and none can part them asunder. It is reported of the Dardani, that they never wash but three times, when they are born, when they marry, and when they die. The true Christian must be daily washing his soul by faith in the blood of his Saviour, and bathing himself in the tears of repentance, and hereby his soul

[1] Sir W. Rawley's Ep. Hist. World, lib. i. cap. 2.

will be fit to be commended into the hands of God by well dying.

2. Clear up thine evidences for heaven. Be not contented to leave thy salvation at uncertainty. They who walk in the dark, are full of frights and fears. The comfort of thy death will depend much upon the clearness of thy deeds and evidences for eternal life. The want of diligence about this, hath caused many of the children of God to go crying to bed, and wrangling to their eternal rest. They die, and know not how they shall speed in the other world; they fall into the hands of their enemy death, as the lepers into the hands of the Syrians, expecting nothing but cruelty and misery, trembling every step of the way, though they find good cheer, and all sorts of comforts.[1]

3. Dwell much in the thoughts of death. Cicero said of fencing, *Fortissima adversus mortem, et dolorem disciplina*, it was the strongest fence against the fear of death; so I may say of entertaining death frequently in our meditations, it is a good guard against the terror of death; custom diminisheth the dread of things which to nature are so frightful. Marius, before he would bring out his soldiers to fight with the Cimbres, caused them to stand upon the trenches, to acquaint themselves with the terrible aspect of those savages, and so brought them to contemn them, which at first sight they so amazedly feared. When we are on a sudden surprised by an unexpected adversary, we want time to unite our strength to resist the assault; but what we expect we provide for, and so are the better able to encounter with it. The old people that lived near the Riphæan mountains, were taught to discourse much of death, and to converse with it, and to speak of it, as of a thing that will certainly come, and ought so to do; hence their resolutions were strengthened to undergo it with patience and courage. As cordials lose their virtue, so even poisons their venom, by frequent use. Mithridates, by constant use of it, made it so far from being mortal, that it was nourishing to him. Though death in its own nature be venomous, the Christian, by frequent meditation of it, and application of the blood of Christ to his soul, may make it profitable to him.

4. Wean thy heart from the earth. They who love the earth as their heaven, will be unwilling to leave it, though for heaven. Canst thou bear the loss of some worldly comforts, when God takes them from thee? If not, how wilt thou be able to bear the loss of all worldly comforts in a dying hour? If running with footmen

[1] *Vide* more of this in 'Fading of the Flesh,' pp. 85–87.

weary thee, how wilt thou be able to run with horsemen? If a little loss, a little load, be ready to break thy back, what wilt thou do under the weight of a great one? Paul was martyred in his affections, before he was martyred in his body; and dead to the world, before he was slain by the world; hence he came to dare even death itself, and to bid it do its worst: 'I protest by your rejoicing, which I have in Christ Jesus, I die daily.' Should a messenger have come to Paul and told him, You must die to-morrow, and leave all the good things of this life; he might have said, That is not now to do, for I died yesterday, and this day, and every day, and I have already taken my leave of this world and all its vanities.[1] Those that, like eels, lie in the mud of worldly pleasures, are unfit to be sacrificed to God, as being unclean creatures, and unwilling to part with their present delights, though for those that are more excellent. The immoderate love of sublunary vanities makes men say, as Peter at Christ's transfiguration, 'It is good to be here;' albeit, like him, they know not what they say.

5. Set thy house in order. After the heart is set in order, the next work is to set the house in order, according to God's counsel, Isa. xxxviii. 1. Abraham was careful, before his death, to settle the affairs of his household, as appeareth by his providing a fit spouse for Isaac, and his giving gifts to the children of his second wife, and sending them away, Gen. xxiv. 1, 2, and xxv. 6. This ought to be done in the time of our health and strength, partly because we are uncertain whether we shall have time and ability in sickness to do it or no. How many have died suddenly; and why not thou and I as well as others? Some who had a mind to make their wills, have not had a tongue to do it with. Others who have had a tongue, have lost the use of their understandings. Partly because in sickness we should have as little as may be to do with the world. All occasions of disturbance or distraction to our souls should be prevented.

The disposition of what God hath given thee must be with prudence, for the maintenance of love among relations; with plainness, that thy meaning may not be mistaken; and with judgment and ability, for the preventing of all quarrels and lawsuits amongst such as are interested in it.

Reader, if thou art careful and faithful in the discharge of these particulars, thy funeral will prove a festival, and the sun of thy life will set, as the natural sun, in a clear evening, not in a cloud, but in such a red sky as to prognosticate the ensuing day to be fair—

[1] See more of this in 'Fading of the Flesh,' pp. 88, 89.

thy certain and comfortable resurrection to bliss and honour. Thy name will live when thou art dead, and thy memory be blessed amongst all that fear the Lord. Tacitus makes one of the Sempronii, not wholly to degenerate from the honour of his house, only for dying well: *Constantia mortis haud indigna Sempronio nomine.* Nero did tacitly wipe Claudius the emperor, though himself were the worst of the two, when, in an ambiguous phrase, he mentions his death: *Desinit morari*[1] *inter homines.* Every sinner goeth out like a snuff, but the just shall be had in everlasting remembrance. By practising these duties thou shalt come to die in the Lord, to rest from thy labours, and to have thy works following thee to thine endless blessed reward.

A good wish about the Christian's exercising himself to godliness on a dying bed; wherein the former heads are applied.

The righteous God having appointed death to be the end of all the children of men, as the common road through which they pass into the other world, to receive according to what they have done in this life, whether it be good, or whether it be evil, I wish that I may be wise to consider of my latter end, and so live that I may rather desire than be afraid to die; that my last days may be my best days, and I may imitate my Redeemer in bringing my God much honour, and doing his church much service, when I am entering into my Master's joy. The evening praiseth the day; the last scene commends the act. The rivers, the nearer they draw to the sea, the sooner they are met by the tide. Though to guide a vessel safely along in the ocean argueth much skill, and such a pilot is worthy of praise; yet at the very entrance into the haven, then to avoid the rocks, and to cast anchor in a safe road, argueth most skill, and deserveth most praise. Musicians reserve the sweetest strain for the close of their lesson. Orators, though in every part of their speech they use great care, yet in the close of their speech they use the utmost of their rhetoric, and put forth all their art and skill to stir up all the affections of their hearers, that they may leave at last the deepest impressions upon their hearts of

[1] *Morari*, having the first syllable short, signifieth to stay, and so the meaning is, Claudius ceased to stay amongst mortal men; but take it as it is derived of the Greek μωρὸς, *stultus*, and hath the first syllable long, in which sense Nero spake it, it importeth, Claudius hath now made an end of playing the fool amongst men.

those things which they would persuade to. My whole life ought to be nothing else but a pleading with my God for mercy, and a walking according to his word; but when I come to the period of my days, how powerful should my prayers, how pious my practices be! how lively my graces! how holy my whole conversation! that my God may say of me, as once of Thyatira, 'I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.' Though violent motions are slowest at last, as being farthest from that strength which forced them contrary to their own inclinations; yet natural motions, proceeding from an inward principle, the nearer the centre, the swifter the motion. Though hypocrites, and such as have only a form of godliness, grow worse and worse, and fill up the measure of their lusts with the measure of their lives, yet gracious persons, and such as have the power of godliness, grow better and better, and complete their task with their time. Oh that the longings, the desires, the faith, the hope, the delight of my soul, like the approaches of a needle, may be so much the more quick, by how much they draw nearer to their loadstone, Jesus Christ. Lord, thou hast an absolute dominion over me, both living and dying. It is thy word, 'None of thine liveth to himself, or dieth to himself; but whether they live, they live unto the Lord, and whether they die, they die unto the Lord; and whether they live or die, they are the Lord's.' Oh help me to glorify thee, both by my life and by my death! Let thy Spirit be strong within me, when my flesh is weak. When the keepers of the house shall tremble, shew thyself the keeper and strength of my heart. When the grinders shall cease, because they are few or weak, give me to feed on the manna of thy promises, and that bread which came down from heaven. When the daughters of music shall be brought low, let me hear by faith the song of Moses and the Lamb, sung by the celestial choir. When they that look out at the window are darkened, let the eyes of my soul be opened, to behold, with thy dying martyr Stephen, Jesus sitting at the right hand of God. Let my hope and desire look out at the windows, and say, 'Why is his chariot (sent to fetch me to himself) so long of coming? Why tarry the wheels of his chariot?' 'Make haste, my beloved, be thou like the hart and roe upon the mountains of spices. Whether I perish in the field with Abel, or in the prison with the Baptist, or in my bed with Jacob, grant me thy gracious comforting presence, and then, though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear none ill. Oh do thou undertake my conduct in my passage over the rough waters of this

Jordan, into Canaan, and then there will be no danger of drowning! Assist me so to live by faith, that I may die in the faith; and when my friends take my earthly body to their disposal, oh do thou receive my heaven-born soul into the arms of thine infinite mercy, for thou hast redeemed it, Lord God of truth.

I wish that I may frequently ponder what a serious, solemn thing it is to die. However light, or vain, or jesting my life hath been, my death will be in earnest. I cannot dally or trifle with it; it will not dally or trifle with me. It can be done but once, and upon it my everlasting making or marring depends. It is so certain, that all must, willing or unwilling, ready or unready, undergo it. Neither the policy of Ahithophel, nor the strength of Samson, nor the wisdom of Solomon, nor the beauty of Absalom, nor the piety of Abraham, nor the wealth of the rich glutton, can prevail to avoid it. No time, no place, no company, no houses, no lands, no relations, no youth, no strength, no power, no preferments, can privilege me against the arrest of death. God hath decreed it, sin hath deserved it, and I must expect it. It is so searching that it will discover all the children of men, both to themselves and angels. Though ships are usually distinguished by their flags, yet that is no sure sign; for mariners, when in sight and fear of their enemies, will ordinarily hang out the colours of other nations, and say they belong to them; but when they come to their haven to unload their vessels, it appears to what country they belong. Though men are usually distinguished by their outward behaviours, yet many for their own ends put on Christ's livery, who are of Satan's family; but when they come to be searched and unladen at the end of their lives, it will be known to whom they belong. When I come to die, then the great controversy between Christ and Satan concerning my soul will be determined, whose it shall be for ever. O my soul, that thou couldst but conceive what it will be to be sent by death into an unchangeable estate, either of bliss or misery! If thou diest in thy sins, thou art killed with death. Shouldst thou now live without conscience, thou wilt die without comfort, and remain comfortless for ever. Ponder a little with thyself the fearful death of a sinner, that thou mayest fly his wicked acts, as thou wouldst his woeful end. In the midst of his jollity and mirth, when he is in an eager pursuit of carnal pleasures, and posting in the way of worldly delights, and running to all excess of riot, he is on a sudden, by death's harbinger, sickness, commanded to stand, and proceed no further. This cuts him to the very heart. His former prosperity, like oil, hath suppled his body, and makes him more

sensible of his present pain. And his immoderate love to those fleshly delights doth abundantly greaten his grief, and increase his loss. Now the man is thrown, whether he will or no, upon his sick-bed, that must be his death-bed. In this his extremity, his companions, and friends, and wife, and children, and honour, and places, and preferments, and silver, and gold, and houses, and lands, and costly attire, and dainty fare, are all dry things, and unsavoury to him; no creature can afford him the least comfort. If he look into his chamber, his wife is weeping and wringing her hands, his children are sighing, his friends are lamenting and wailing, but all this doth increase, not mitigate, his vexation and misery. If he looks into his conscience, he finds that taking courage, and telling him to his face, that though formerly he would not suffer it to speak, yet now it must tell him the truth, that death, and hell, and wrath, are the wages of his ungodly works. It will bring to his mind the time he hath misspent, the talents that he hath misimproved, the day of grace that he hath despised, the great salvation that he hath neglected; his secret, and private, and public sins, the sins of his childhood, of his youth, of his riper age, those sins which he had forgotten, and thought should never have been remembered, are all set in order before his eyes. His heart, which was before harder than the nether millstone, is now pierced, though not with an evangelical contrition, yet with legal terrors and torments. His sickness will allow no rest to his body, and his sins will afford no ease to his soul. In the evening he crieth, Would God it were morning; in the morning, Would God it were evening, because of the anguish of his spirit. His bones are filled with a painful disease, and his body with unquietness. The arrows of the Almighty are within him, the poison thereof drinks up his spirit; and the terrors of God do set themselves in array against him. His review of his past actions, his remembering of his slighting Christ for a brutish pleasure, or a little fading treasure, or a base lust, and provoking God, and continuance in sin, against mercies, judgments, warnings, the light of conscience, the motions of the Spirit, are as so many envenomed arrows sticking in his side, and piercing him through with many sorrows; but the thoughts of his necessity of dying, and his forethoughts of the consequence of death, how hell rides upon its back, and eternal torments attend it; how he must fry in unquenchable flames, and take up his everlasting lodging amongst roaring lions, frightful dragons, and the hellish crew, sink him quite down. To add some more gall and wormwood to his cup of bitterness, the devil now steps in, and sheweth him

his sins in their black hue, in their bloody colour and countenance, to make him hopeless and desperate. The poor creature, in this miserable plight and plunge, knoweth not what to do, whither to go for relief. Die he would not, but must; live he would, but cannot. Now he wisheth that he had prayed and served God, and minded his soul and salvation more, and gratified his flesh, and embraced the pleasures and honours of the world less. Now he desireth that he might live a little longer, and thinks, Oh how would I redeem time, and follow after holiness, and walk with God, what would I not do and suffer to lay up some comfort, some cordial against such an hour! But whilst he is thus in the midst of his vain wishes, death tells him, by the violence of his distemper, that the time of his departure is at hand. His eyes now begin to sink, his speech to falter, his breath to shorten, and his heart to fail him, and a cold sweat to seize on his whole body. He strives and struggleth with all his might to continue here, but death, like a cruel sergeant, drags him to the bar of God, whence he is immediately, with frowns and fury, dismissed, and hauled to the dreadful and eternal dungeon of hell. Oh the howlings, the screeching, the groans, the grief, which possesseth this poor soul, when he is attacked by devils, those merciless officers, and carried by them to the lake that burns with fire and brimstone for ever! The spirit being now gone, the body remains a cold lump of clay, forsaken of its dearest friends, loathsome to its nearest relations, fit for no company but the worm-eaten congregation, amongst which it must abide till the last day, when it shall be joined to the soul, and partake with it in unconceivable and endless torments.

Ah, who can read such a soul's estate with dry eyes; or think of such a condition without sorrow! O my soul, what are thy thoughts of such a death? Wouldst thou, for the most prosperous worldling's life, die such a death? Doth not thine heart ache whilst thou art musing on it? If thou wouldst not meet with the end of such men, avoid their ways. Lord, I confess myself a great sinner, and thou mightst justly leave me to walk in the counsel of the ungodly, and to go in the paths of the destroyer, that my feet should tend to death, and my steps take hold of hell; yet, for thy Son's sake, teach me thy way, and lead me in thy righteousness, that my soul may never be gathered with sinners, nor my life with bloody men, that I may die the death of the righteous, and my latter end may be like his.

I wish that I may look upon a dying bed as a fit pulpit in which I may preach my Maker's and Redeemer's praise. The speeches of

dying persons are often highly prized, as savouring of most sincerity, and least suspected of selfish ends. They who scorned my counsel, and rejected my advice, in my health and strength, as fearing it proceeded rather from interest than simplicity of heart, will, if they have the least grain of charity, believe me in earnest, and my words to be the language of my soul, when I am dying, and entering into my eternal estate. The worst of men have some reverence and respect for dying Christians. What thrusting and crowding, even to the prejudice of their bodies, hath there often been to hear the speeches and last words of dying men. The vilest malefactor, who is cut off by the sword of justice, is permitted with patience to speak, and attended to with diligence at the gallows. If enemies have some respect for dying felons, and will hearken to them with meekness, what hopes may a dying saint have of advantaging the souls of his friends! Oh that I might greedily embrace such an opportunity of advantaging the interest and honour of my God, the service and good of my neighbours, and by my pious language and gracious carriage at my latter end, make others in love with holiness, holy men, and the Holy One of Israel! Sinners catch hold of every season to propagate their ungodly seed, and commend Satan's rotten wares to the men of the world; why should not saints be as vigilant, as diligent, for their God and Saviour? Lord, I know not in what manner, by what distemper, it will please thee to call me to thyself. I beg, if it may seem good in thy sight, that nothing may befall me on my dying bed, which may render me incapable of commending thee, and thy ways and worship, to others. My cheerfulness in bearing thy will, and activeness to extol thy work and reward, may through thy blessing persuade Satan's drudges to forsake his slavery, and admit themselves thy servants. Oh that I might allure others to prepare for such a day, by lifting up my head with joy, when that day of redemption draweth nigh! The apprentice makes merry when his time is expired, and he enjoyeth his freedom. The bride hath a feast and music when her marriage-day is come. This life is my time of service, death sets me at liberty. In this world I am contracted to my dearest Saviour; my solemn marriage is in the other world, into which I pass through death. Why should I fear that messenger which brings such good news, and be troubled at that friend who will do me so great a courtesy? Oh enable me to live every day according to thy gospel, that keeping my conscience clean, and my evidences clear, I may, in the day of my death, rejoice and be exceeding glad. Give me to savour the sweetness of thy love, the pleasantness of thy

paths, to feel the powerful influences of thy Spirit, the virtue and efficacy of thy word; so to relish communion with thyself and thy dear Son all the days of my life, that when I am going out of the world and coming to thee, O Father, I may from my own experience quicken and encourage others to forsake earthly vanities, before earthly vanities forsake them, and to take thee for their chiefest good, and choicest happiness, who will never leave them nor forsake them.

I wish that the nearer I draw to my reward, the more zealous and industrious I may be about my work; and that when my body droopeth and faileth most, my soul may be most vigorous and active in the exercise of grace. I am infinitely indebted to the blessed God, for his unspeakable grace to my precious soul; my engagements to the dearest Redeemer, for loving me and washing me in his own blood, are far beyond my apprehension. This is the last opportunity that I shall ever enjoy to testify my thankfulness, and to do my God, my Saviour, my soul, any service; oh how diligent should I be to promote their interest, and improve this season! Nature, in its last conflict with a disease, puts forth itself to the utmost. It draweth in those spirits, which before were scattered in the outward parts, to guard and arm the heart; it rallieth all those forces which are left, if possible, to win the day. Oh why should not grace, in its last encounter, muster up all its strength, and put forth itself to the utmost! Lust is strong to the last. When nature is weak and spent, and the sinner disabled from his unclean or intemperate acts, even then he can hug them in his heart, and roll them under his tongue as a sweet morsel, and commit them over and over again in his thoughts, and fancy, and affections. The dying thief on the cross, when his hands and feet were nailed, and by force kept in order, could yet find his tongue at liberty, before his death, to rail at and revile the Lord of life. Ah, is it not a thousand pities that grace should be outvied by lust, and that those that are paid with such lamentable wages as everlasting burnings, should die serving their cruel master, and enter into hell, belching out their blasphemies, and spitting their poison in the face of Heaven! and that the children of God should do their Father so little service, when they are going to their blissful mansions, and can do him no more! Love to myself, as well as to my God, may quicken me to labour with all my might, when I draw near my last hour. As I fall now, I lie for ever. My eternal estate dependeth more upon my death than my life. It is possible, though rare, that a profane life may be cor-

rected by a penitent death; but a wicked death can never be amended. He that shoots off a piece, if he be not steady just at its going off, loseth his charge, and misseth his mark. He that dieth ill, dieth ever; he is killed with death. He that goeth awry, when he goeth out of the world, shall never come back to recall or amend his steps. If I am a conqueror now, I am a conqueror for ever; if I am foiled now, I am foiled for ever. Cowards will fight desperately when they are in extremity, and must either kill or be killed. The historian saith of Cn. Piso, a confederate of Cataline's, that though he had a heart like a hare, yet he could fight like a lion when he apprehended a necessity of fighting for his life. Oh that my pains, my diligence, may be answerable to my peril and my danger. Lord, when that day and hour draweth near, that I must go hence and be no more seen, do thou draw near in boundless mercy to my poor soul. When I must enter into the chambers of death, and make my bed in the grave, save me from the paws of Satan, and the power of hell, that the bottomless pit may not shut her mouth upon me; and give me to triumph in that hour of tribulation, as knowing that neither tribulation, nor persecution, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor life, nor death, can separate me from thy love, which is in Christ Jesus my Lord.

I wish that, when I am going to the place of silence, I may speak the excellencies of my God, and make his praise glorious. It is the unhappiness of worldlings and wicked men that they cannot, when they die, commend the principles whence they have acted, nor the vain pleasures which they have minded and pursued. How many of them, whose lives have been nothing but a bundle of falsehood and lies, when God hath called them to leave the world, have spoken the truth, and told their friends and relations that sin is an evil and bitter thing, that carnal pleasures are gilded poisons, that the greatest and choicest of worldly comforts, though they may have honey in their mouths, have a sting in their tails; and what a vain, empty nothing the whole creation is! How often have they complained how the world hath deceived them, the flesh deluded them, and the devil beguiled and destroyed them! It is my privilege, as well as my duty, to extol my Master whom I have served, to commend the sweetness of his ways, the pleasantness of his worship, the reasonableness of his precepts, the richness of his promises, and the vastness of that portion which he hath laid up for his children when they come to age. I have sometimes tasted his work and ways to be sweeter than the honey and the honey-

comb. I have viewed by faith his reward to be vastly glorious, and beyond all apprehensions excellent. Oh, why should I not dissuade others from their eager pursuit of foolish, fading shadows, and persuade and encourage them to earnest endeavours after real substance and durable riches! The sinner, who hath wallowed all his lifetime in the mire of filth and wickedness, will, when he comes to die, and begins to return to his wits, from his own experience of the emptiness and unprofitableness of his ungodly courses, and from the convictions of his natural conscience, acknowledge a sober, sanctified conversation to be safest, and the ways of God to be most gainful; and upon these accounts, advise his friends and relations to forsake and abandon the lusts of the world and flesh, and to follow after holiness, as they would be happy eternally. And have not I much more cause to shew my abhorrency of sin, and love to my Saviour and his image, when I am entering into my Father's house? The sinner hath only found at last a fleshly life to be vain and fruitless, and is like to pay dear for his learning; but I have known the paths of piety to be paths of pleasantness, and rejoiced more in them than in all riches. The sinner hath only the dim light of nature to shew him the loathsomeness of vice, and the loveliness of grace; but I have the Holy Spirit of my God to enlighten my mind in the knowledge of both. The sinner hath only a carnal love to his neighbours and kindred; he knoweth not what it is to love them in Christ, and for Christ. I have some knowledge of the love and law of Christ, of the worth of their souls, of the price paid for them by the Lord Jesus, and their unchangeable conditions in the other world. Oh that my language to them might be somewhat answerable to the love of Christ to me! Lord, it is unrighteousness to die in debt to man, and not to endeavour to make them satisfaction according to my power. I am sure to die in thy debt; for I am less than the least of all thy mercies, and unable to requite thee for the smallest of thy favours. It is my comfort that all the recompense thou expectest is a thankful acknowledgment and hearty acceptance of thy grace and goodwill. Oh what injustice and ingratitude were I guilty of, should I deny thee so small a request! Be pleased to help thy servant in his last hours, both to accept unfeignedly of thy grace for his own good, and to acknowledge thy goodwill, and bounty, and faithfulness, to thy glory, for the good of others.

I wish that my last breath may be drawn heavenward; I mean, that I may enter praying into the house of blessing and praise. I am no Christian, if I do not give myself to prayer whilst I live. It

is one choice piece of my spiritual armour, whereby I have often assaulted and conquered my soul-enemies. It is the ambassador which I have many a time sent to the heavenly court, that always received a favourable audience, and obtained his errand. It is the vessel which hath brought me food from far, and ever returned richly laden, if it were not my own fault. It is the element in which I live; the aliment by which I subsist; the pulse, the breath of my soul, without which it must needs die. On my death-bed I have as much need of its succour as at any season. My adversaries will then employ their greatest power and policy to rout and ruin me; I am but weak flesh and blood, altogether unable to combat with principalities and powers; and how can I expect supplies from the Lord of hosts, unless I send this messenger to entreat it? My wants and weaknesses at such a time will be more than ordinary. Faith must then be acted, in spite of all the frights and fears which a malicious devil, and an unbelieving heart, from the number and nature of my sins, the strictness of the law, and the justice of God, may put me to. Repentance must then be exercised, and my sins lie nearer my heart than my sharpest diseases. In patience I must possess my soul, under all the pains and pressures which the wise God shall lay upon me. I must then cheerfully submit to the divine pleasure, and by my willingness to leave all the world to go to Christ, shew that I hate father, mother, wife, child, house, lands, life, and all for Christ. Those graces, and many other, must be put forth at such a time, none of which I can do by my own power, and therefore have abundant cause to fetch help from heaven by prayer. Besides, the distempers of my body will discompose my soul, and unfit it in a great measure for all holy service. Again, my benefactors, my near friends and relations, the poor afflicted church of God, do all call aloud to me to pray for them, as the last kindness I shall ever do for them. I profess I love them, how can I manifest it better than by commending them to God in prayer? Should I leave them thousands of silver and gold, if I were able, it would not all amount to the price of one fervent prayer. My riches might wrong them through the deceitfulness of their hearts, and cause them to be contented short of heaven; but my prayers cannot prejudice them, but may much further their eternal welfares. Men whose natures are crabbed and cruel, have granted the requests of their dying children, when they have been contrary to their own humours; how much more will God, the Father of mercies, whose nature is love, whose bowels are infinite, satisfy the desire of his dying children, when they fall in with his own design and desire?

If Joab had hopes to speed in his supplication for Absalom, because he knew the king's heart was more for it than his own, may not I be confident to speed, when I beg that he would pay my debts in spirituals with interest to those who have bestowed carnals on me for his sake; when I ask that my children and relations may love, and fear, and worship his Majesty, and be his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works; and when I entreat that he would accomplish all the great and good things which he hath promised to his church, the purchase of his Christ, knowing that his heart is infinitely more for these things than mine can be! Lord, when I die, I shall no more put up prayers for myself or other particular persons. My natural obligations to my kindred and relations, my civil engagements to my friends and benefactors, besides my spiritual bonds to them and thy whole Israel, may well provoke me to be fervent and instant with thy Majesty at such an hour on their behalf. My Redeemer, before his death, wrought hard at this duty: he offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears. Ah, how should I pray for myself and others, when I am taking my leave of prayer! Oh let thy Spirit of supplication be so poured down on me, that I may pour out my spirit in supplication unto thee for my own and other souls, through thy Son, with the greatest success.

I wish that the night of my death may shine gloriously with the sparkling stars of divine and heavenly graces. In particular, I desire that when the time of my combat with my last enemy, and my last combat with any enemy, shall come, I may above all take the shield of faith, whereby I shall be sheltered against the sting of death, and quench the fiery darts of the wicked one. The wise mariner, perceiving a storm approaching, makes haste to fasten his vessel with anchors, that it may be steady, and not altogether at the mercy of the winds. I must expect the greatest tempest when I am entering into my eternal haven; then all the powers of darkness will conjure up their strongest winds, if possible to shipwreck the vessel of my soul. Ah, how much doth it concern me to put forth this grace, the anchor of my soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil, and thereby to fasten on the rock of ages! If I fail in this, I fall, I miscarry for ever. God is a severe judge to condemn all guilty malefactors. Without his Son, I am clothed with guilt, and so under his boundless wrath. When Adam had disrobed himself of original righteousness by disobeying the law, he fled from God, and dreaded the summons of offended justice. There is no appearing in the Father's

sight with acceptance, but in the garments of his Son. None can have boldness to enter into the holy of holies, but by the blood of Jesus. It is faith only that interesteth in this blood. I know that through the Red Sea of this blood I may pass safely, though enemies pursue me hard, into the land of promise. Lord, I confess, through an evil heart of unbelief, I have many a time departed away from the living God; yet, Lord, I believe, help mine unbelief. O Lord of life, be not far from me, when devils and death are near me; help me, with thy servant Stephen, to see heaven open, by faith, and the Son of man at thy right hand. Enable me to disclaim whatsoever duties I have performed, or graces I have exercised, and to rely alone on a crucified Christ for pardon and life. Though thou killest me, let me die trusting and clinging on, and cleaving to, Jesus Christ. Let this pilgrim's staff of faith be never out of my hand, till I come to my journey's end. Thou art the Lord of hosts, and the captain of my salvation. Oh help me to put on the whole armour of God; grant me such skill to use it, that I may be able to stand in the evil day. Teach thou my hands to war, and my fingers to fight, that through thee I may do valiantly, and through thee may tread down mine enemies. Grant me so to finish my course, to fight the good fight of faith, that at death I may receive the crown of righteousness, which the righteous judge shall give to all that love his appearing.

I wish that my faith may ripen into full assurance, that thereby I may depart with joy, and an abundant entrance may be ministered unto me, into the kingdom of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Moses and Simeon could sing at their own funerals. The great apostle could call to be put to bed, expecting thereby his sweetest eternal rest. How many martyrs have gone more joyfully to die than ever epicure did to dine, and leaped when they drew near the stake, believing that they drew near their home, their happiness, their heaven! What is it, O my soul, that makes thee start and flinch back at the sight of this bugbear? What is there in death that is so dreadful to thee? Is it the sweetness of life, or the pain of death, or thy future estate after death? Consider them all seriously, and then judge rationally whether any of these should make thee sigh, so loath to depart.

First, The love of life need not make thee so backward to obey the call of death. If all thy time were made up of holidays, death would bring thee greater advantage. The garlic and onions of Egypt are nothing comparable to the clusters of Canaan. But, alas! it is far otherwise; thy whole life is a civil death. Thou art

born to sorrow as the sparks fly upward. Thy days are few, but full of trouble. The earth to thee is a valley of tears; the cross is thy daily companion, which accompanieth thee wherever thou goest. The sufferings of the flesh are neither few nor small. How many diseases in thy body, losses in thy estate! how much disgrace, ignominy, slander, oppression, art thou liable to! The sufferings of thy spirit are more and greater. Thine own sins, the provocations of others, the dishonour of thy God, the wants, and weaknesses, and oppression, and persecution of the church of Christ, do all give thee daily occasion to mingle thy bread with ashes, and thy drink with weeping. What is this world, that thou art so fond of it? Thy God calls it a sea of glass, mingled with fire, Rev. xv. 2. A sea for its turbulency; it is never at rest, but ebbs and flows continually, though sometimes more, sometimes less. Its work is to bubble up mire and dirt, especially on them who are chosen out of the world. A sea of glass for its fragility; all its pomp and pride on a sudden vanisheth. Glass is both easily and irrecoverably broken in pieces. A sea of glass, mingled with fire, for the fiery and dreadful miseries that befall men in it. All its apparent comforts are mingled with real crosses. In heaven there is solace, without the least grain of sorrow; in hell there is mourning, without the smallest drachm of mirth; but on earth there is no estate without mixture. The saints have joy in God, but if need be they are in heaviness through manifold tribulations, 1 Pet. i. 6. The merry sinners, in the midst of their pleasures, have their hearts heavy. Some of the wiser heathen were so sensible of human miseries, that one of them, when ancient, told his scholar, that if it were offered him to be young again, he would not accept it. Saints, of all men, must expect a large draught of sufferings; the world is their enemy, and raiseth all its forces against them. If I be a disciple, I must look to follow my Master in bearing his cross. O my soul, why shouldst thou hug that which hates thee, and doat on this world, which is neither a fit match for thee, as being unsuitable to thy nature, nor, if she were, can be faithful to thee, being made up of wavering and inconstancy. Or, secondly, Is it the pain of death that thou art so frighted at? Surely the fear of it is the greatest torment. How many have felt greater pain in divers diseases, as in the stone, or strangury, or colic, than in a dying hour! Some of God's children have felt very little pain, in the judgment of those that have seen them dying. The waters of Jordan, though rough to others, have stood still when the ark was to pass over. But though I were sure my pain should be sharp,

yet I am sure it shall be short. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, I shall be transported over the gulf of misery into endless glory. My pangs will be almost as soon gone as come; sorrow will endure but for a short night, joy will come in the morning. If I were assured of a great purchase made for me in Spain or Turkey, which upon my first coming over I should enjoy, would I not adventure a passage through the boisterous ocean to take possession? My Saviour hath made a larger, a better purchase for me in heaven. He is gone before to prepare a place for me. My passage thither, though it may be more painful, is less perilous. It is impossible for me to miscarry in it. Oh, why am I so slothful to go in and possess the good land! Surely the pleasures of the end may well sweeten the ways to it, were they never so bitter. With what cheerfulness do some women undergo their sharp throes and hard labours, supported with this cordial, that a child shall thereby be born to them! Oh, how infinitely inferior is the joy of a man-child brought forth into this world, to the joy of a sanctified soul, brought out of this world into heaven!

Again, I have a tender Father, who knoweth my frame, and will lay no more upon me, living or dying, than he will enable me to bear. He hath said it, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.' O my soul, thou hast little reason to dread a contest with this enemy for this cause! Thou mayest contentedly undergo a little pain to go to thy dearest Lord, when many a sinner hath suffered greater to satisfy his hellish lust.

Thirdly, Is it thy future condition that makes thee unwilling to die? Dost thou not know that death is thy portal, through which thou shalt pass into the true paradise? It is the strait gate through which thou shalt enter into life. Though it is the wicked man's shipwreck, which swalloweth him up in an ocean of wrath and torment, yet it is the saint's putting into harbour, where he is received with the greatest acclamation and richest welcome imaginable.

Travellers who have met with many dangers and troubles in their journeys, rejoice when they come near their own country. I am a pilgrim here, and used, or rather abused, as a stranger; shall I not be glad when I come near my blessed home, my eternal, happy habitation? Children in some parts, when they first behold the stork, the messenger of the spring, testify their joy with pleasant and loud shoutings. Oh, why shouldst not thou lift up thy head with joy, when sickness, the forerunner of death, is come to bring thee tidings that the winter of thy misery, and cold, and hardships, is

past, and the summer of thine eternal light, and joy, and pleasure is at hand? Thy death may well be a free-will offering, considering that though the ashes of the sacrifice (thy body) fall to the earth, yet that divine flame (thy immortal spirit) shall ascend to heaven. In death nothing dieth of thee but what thou mayest well spare, thy sin and sorrows. When the house is pulled to pieces, all those ivy roots in the wall shall be destroyed. The egg-shell must be broken, that the little chick may slip out. Thy body must be dissolved, that thy soul may be delivered; yet thy body doth not die, but sleep in the bed of the grave till the morning of the resurrection. That outward apparel shall not be utterly consumed by the moth of time, but locked up safe, as in a chest, to be new trimmed, and gloriously adorned above the sun in his greatest lustre, and put on again when thou shalt awake in the morning, never, never, to put off more. Oh that I could so live, that I might not only be always ready, but also, when God calls me, desirous to die. If I borrow anything of my neighbour, I pay it back with thanks. My life is God's; he lends it me for a time. Why should I not, when he calls for it, restore it with thanks, that he hath been pleased to lend it me so long? Lord, thy children love thee dearly, and believe that when they come home to thee thou wilt entertain them kindly; yet their flesh, like Lot's wife, is still hankering after the Sodom of this world, and loath they are to leave it, though it be for their exceeding gain. Give thy servant such true faith in thy Son, that I may neither love life nor fear death immoderately; but as the heart of Jacob revived when he saw the waggons which Joseph sent to fetch him to Egypt, so my heart may leap for joy to behold the heavenly chariot which the Son of Joseph shall send to convey me to the true Goshen.

I wish that I may with patience submit on my dying bed to the divine pleasure. It hath been far from some moralists to murmur, either at the extremity of their sickness, or the necessity of dying. By impatience I do not help, but rather kill myself beforehand. It is the general lot of mankind to sicken and die. Am I angry that I am a man, that I am mortal? Because I know that I must be sick and die, I know that I must submit. The knowledge of an approaching evil is no small good, if improved. Though it cannot teach me to prevent it by all my power or providence, yet it may teach me to prepare for it, and to bear it with courage and patience. Discontent and quarrelling are great arguments of guilt and a defiled conscience. The harmless sheep, conscious of their innocency, do quietly receive the knife, either on the altar or

in the shambles, and give death entrance with small reluctancy, when the filthy, loathsome swine roar horribly at their first handling, and with hideous cries are haled and held to the fatal block. The children of God and members of Christ, who are perfect through their head, do often give up the ghost, and desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ; when the souls of wicked men are required of them, they are strangely passionate at the approach of death, and with dreadful screeches salute its harbinger, sickness. Oh that patience might have its perfect work in me, when I am taking my leave of it, and its work is near an end! Lord, my heart is too prone to be impatient under thy hand, though thou art infinitely wise as well as gracious, and knowest what is best for me. In my sickness turn mine eyes upon my sins, that my discontent may be at myself, for that which is the original of all my sorrows; and then I shall never repine or murmur against thee.

I wish that I may daily think of death, and wait, believing and repenting, and working out my salvation, till my change shall come. My whole time is given me, that therein I might prepare and dress my soul for my blessed eternal estate. Why should it not be employed for that end? The child who hath all day been diligent about his duty, may expect his father's good word at night. But what master will give a reward to him in the evening, who hath all the day long served his enemy? My life is the seed which will yield a crop of horror, or comfort, in an hour of death. If that be good, my harvest will be glorious and joyful; if that be sinful, my harvest will be bitter and sorrowful. 'Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?' The grapes of comfort are not to be expected from the thistles of corruption; nor the figs of peace, from the thorns of impiety. I should blush to commit to the keeping of a cleanly and considerable person, a foul and filthy vessel. With what face can I commend to the holy and glorious God an impure and polluted soul? Oh how dreadful will it be to meet with my dying bed, before I have met with the Lord of life; and to be going out of the world, before I have seriously considered why I came into it! My great work in this world is to get my depraved nature healed by the blood and Spirit of Christ; if I forget my business when I have time to do it, and trifle away my days in doing evil, or doing nothing, I lose my soul, am unfaithful to my Master, and deepen my judgment by the number of my days. That traveller may well be aghast and perplexed, who hath a long journey to go upon pain of death in one day, for which the whole day is little enough, and seeth the sun near setting before he hath begun his

journey. How ill doth the evening of my time, and the morning of my task, accord together! How justly may God reserve the dregs of his wrath for me, if I reserve the dregs of my days for him! What folly am I guilty of, in deferring my preparation for death! If he be a ridiculous person, that having choice of lusty horses, should let them all go empty, and lay an extraordinary heavy load upon a poor tired jade, that is hardly able to go, much more foolish is he that prodigally wasteth his youth, and health, and strength, in the service of the flesh and the world, and leaves the great and weighty affairs of his soul and eternity to be transacted on a sick or dying bed. O my soul, what little cause hast thou to future or delay thy solemn provision for the other world! First, thy life is uncertain; thou hast not another day at thy disposal. There are some creatures, they say, in Pontus,[1] whose life lasteth but one day: they are born in the morning, come to their full growth at noon, grow old in the evening, and die at night. What is thy life but a vapour, that soon passeth away? The first minute thou didst begin to live, thou didst begin to die. Death was born when thou wast born; the last act of life is but the completing of death. As on thy birthday thou didst begin to die, so on the day of thy death thou dost cease to live. How many outward accidents, and inward diseases, art thou every moment liable to! May I not say to thee, as Michal to David, 'Save thyself to-night, for to-morrow thou shalt be slain'? Others have died suddenly, by imposthumes, or the falling-sickness, or violent means; and if thou promisest thyself a fair warning, before the fatal stroke, thou dost but cozen and cheat thyself. But, secondly, If thou wert sure to see the evening star of sickness, before the night of death overtake thee, thou art not sure thy sickness shall not be such as may not incapacitate thee for the working out thy salvation. Extremity of pain, anguish of body, lack of sleep, the violence of a fever, may indispose thee, and distract thee, that thou canst not so much as think of God. Or thy distemper may be such, that the physician may charge thee not to trouble thyself with melancholy or sad thoughts, lest thou wrongest thy body, and yet the minister commandeth thee to pull up those sluices of sorrow, if thou wouldst not lose thy soul for ever. Or cold diseases, as the lethargy or palsy, may surprise thee, and incline thee to continual slumbers, till at last thou sleepest the sleep of death. Oh how sottish art thou, and how grossly doth the destroyer of souls delude thee to defer that work of absolute necessity, of conversion to God, upon which thine endless weal or woe

[1] Plut.

dependeth, to a dying bed, when thou art not sure to die in thy bed, but mayest as well die in thy shop or fields, or in the streets; when thou art uncertain what disease, if thou shouldst meet with a dying bed, should send thee to thy eternal home; when thou art neither master of thy time nor reason, nor of thy natural abilities, much less of supernatural grace, which is indispensably requisite to this great work! Oh that, since I must die once for sin, I might die daily to sin; and as the Philistines, that they might the better deal with Samson, cut off his hair, wherein his great strength lay; so that I may the better deal with death, I may by faith and repentance, daily cut off and destroy sin, wherein the strength of death lieth! May I not say to thee, O my soul, as Joshua to Israel? 'Prepare ye victuals, for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go to possess the land which the Lord your God giveth you.' Prepare the spiritual food, the flesh of Christ, which is meat indeed, and the blood of Christ, which is drink indeed; a heart weaned from the world, longing to be with God; for within a few days thou shalt go in, to possess the land of promise. Lord, I know nothing more certain than death. Sin hath deserved it, my brittle body enforceth it; thou hast decreed it, and none can prevent it. I know nothing more uncertain than the time when, or the manner how. Thou hast many ways and means to bring me to my grave; not only ordinary distempers of my body, but thousands of casual dangers. I cannot promise myself freedom from it, in any place or condition. Death may seize me abroad, at home, in company, in solitude, at bed, at board. Why should I not always provide for that extremity, that enemy, which I cannot avoid? Why should I not ever be ready for that which may come at any time, and will come at some time or other? Surely I do not hasten my death by preparing for it, but sweeten it exceedingly. I shall not die a moment the sooner, but infinitely the better. Should death overtake me in my sins, alas! where am I? What will become of me for ever? I may well salute it, as Ahab Elijah, with, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? For it will come to me, as the prophet to that king, with doleful, dreadful tidings. It will bring me news of a dismal dungeon of darkness, to be my habitation; of lions, and scorpions, and dragons, to be my companions; of a never dying worm, an unquenchable fire, pure wrath without mixture, full torments without measure, to be my portion for ever and ever. Oh teach me so to live above this vain empty life, so to be crucified to this world, so to make my peace with thy Majesty, through the great peacemaker, and Prince of peace, my Lord Jesus, so to set

my heart and house, my spiritual and temporal concernments in order, that I may be delivered from the paw of the lion, from the teeth of this monster, from the sting of this serpent; and though my body be destroyed, yet my soul may escape, as a bird out of the snare of the fowler, and mount up to thyself, to enjoy that happy life which shall know no death.

I wish that all the days of my appointed time I may exercise myself herein, to keep a conscience void of offence towards God, and towards all men. There are but two which can afford me real comfort in a dying hour, which always take the same side, and join together, God and my conscience. Human friends often stand afar off, when they should be most near, and I have most need. Some of them are loath to come to a sick man's chamber. Mournful objects must not disturb their jollity and mirth. They are sworn enemies to sorrowful occasions, and banish such foes their quarters, or themselves from such coasts. Others, if they come to visit me, love not to see my ghastly countenance, like not to hear my deep and deadly groans. But be they never so full of pity, they can only sympathise with me, they cannot relieve, refresh me. The most they can do, is to accompany me to my grave, and there they leave me. But, oh the comfort which a loving God, and a conscience sprinkled with the blood of Christ, and purged from dead works, will afford me in a dying hour! The smiles of a God, and cheerings of a good conscience, will be music indeed, to welcome me to the shore, after all my tumblings and tossings in this tempestuous ocean. They will make my bed in my sickness, help me to lie easy, hearten me in my sighs and groans, be my feast at my funeral, bid me be of good cheer, for my sins are forgiven me; tell me that my Redeemer liveth, and because he liveth, I shall live also; lodge my body in a grave, as in a bed of spices, and convey my soul into my Saviour's bosom and embraces; when my houses, lands, honours, friends, wife, children, leave me, they will cleave to me; nay, when my breath, life, heart, flesh forsake me, they will not fail me; yea, when faith, hope, patience, repentance, shall bid me farewell, weeping, as Orpah did Ruth, these, like Naomi, will stick to me, go with me, and seek rest for me. Oh that my heart may be so upright in the service of my God, that when I shall receive the sentence of death, I may be able to say, with good Hezekiah, 'Remember now, I beseech thee, O Lord, how I have walked before thee, in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight.' O my soul, what a friend shouldst thou be to thy God, thy conscience, how faithful to their warnings,

now in life, if thou wouldst have them thy friends at death! Hereby thou mayest be able to triumph in that hour of temptation, to defy death itself, and bid it do its worst. Though it be the common gate through which the sinner goeth into prison, where he meets with chains and fetters, and cold, and all sorts of miseries, yet thou shalt go through it, into the king's palace, where thou shalt have rivers of pleasures, and choice entertainment. If Jacob went down so joyfully into Egypt, when God had said to him, 'Fear not to go down, for I will go down with thee, and I will bring thee up again;' what needst thou fear to go down into the grave, when thy God hath undertaken to go down with thee thither, and to bring thee up again? Thy body may be turned into dust, but thy God is in covenant with thy dust; and thy head, the blessed Redeemer, will not suffer one muscle, or nerve, or artery, or vein of any of his members to be lost. With what cheerfulness mayest thou take thy leave of thy body. Farewell, sweet body, thou hast been in some measure faithful to thy soul, in the service of thy Lord. Farewell, I must bid thee good-night, till the morning of the resurrection. Be thou content to go to bed and sleep in the dust, and rest in hope; 'For though after the skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold him, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me.' Though thou art sown in dishonour, thou shalt be raised in glory; though thou art sown in weakness, thou shalt be raised in power; though thou art sown a natural body, thou shalt be raised a spiritual body, and fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ himself. Thy dust shall live, and thou shalt arise and be joined to this soul, and both join with the great assembly of the first-born, in singing the praises of thy Master and husband. The soldier is glad when he is called to receive his pay, though the ways be deep and dirty through which he travelleth to the place of muster. The husbandman rejoiceth when his fields are white to the harvest, and with piping and shouting accompanieth his last load into the barn. Oh that my life might be so sanctified and devoted to my God, that at my death he may be my solace! Ah, Lord, it matters not who be failing to visit me on my sick-bed, so thou be present with me. Nay, though mine enemies come and say, When shall he die, and his name perish? An evil disease cleaveth to him; now that he lieth down, he shall rise up no more. If thou pleasest to visit me with thy saving health, I shall not be afraid when I walk in the valley of the shadow of death. Oh, when the sun of my life shall be setting, let the Sun of righteousness so arise

upon me, that I may be delivered from the power, curse, and sting of death, and may find it, through his merits, to be my haven of rest, after all my foul weather; a bed of ease, after my sore labour; a release out of prison, and my jubilee to give me possession of an inheritance undefiled, incorruptible, that fadeth not away, which is reserved in heaven for me. Amen.

CHAPTER IX.

Means whereby Christians may exercise themselves to godliness. A good foundation. Living by faith. Setting God always before our eyes.

I come now to the second thing promised—namely, to lay down the means whereby Christians may come to make religion their business.

First, If thou wouldst exercise thyself to godliness, be sure that thou layest a good foundation in a renewed heart and nature. I begin with this, because it is the chiefest requisite, and the basis of all. Godliness must first spring up in the heart, before it can overflow in the life. Other means are like those parts of the body, the want of which may be supplied by others; but this is like the heart, which if wanting, nothing can make up its want. A dead man will as soon arise and walk, as an unsanctified person make religion his business. Everything will act according to that principle which is predominant in it; though for a time it may, by violence, work contrary to its natural inclination, yet it will endeavour the removal of that force, and return to its old course. Fire moveth upwards, and earth downwards, both striving to overturn what standeth in their way—because the place of fire is above, of earth, beneath. A river may be stopped and hindered in its current; but it will never cease till it hath overborne the dam, and attained its former passage. Water that is naturally sweet, may be made brackish by the overflowing of salt water; but it will not leave till it hath worked out that saltness, and returneth to his natural sweetness. So every man, whether good or bad, will act according to his nature, whether gracious or vicious. A good man may be hindered in his holy course by temptations, and the violence of the flesh; but, because his nature is gracious, he will never be at rest till he hath forcibly broke through those impediments, and got into his former way of godliness. An evil man may step

into the path of piety through the example of others, or good education, or some slender convictions of a natural conscience; but he will quickly be weary; he will not hold out in it; he will break through those obstacles, because his nature—the stream of his heart—runs another way.

The heart of man is like the spring of the clock, which causeth the wheels to move, right or wrong, well or ill. Hence it is that God's precept is to this, 'Make you a new heart, and a new spirit;' and his promise of this, 'I will put my fear into their hearts, and they shall never depart away from me.' The fear of God in the heart will bind thee fast to God in thy life. If the heart be thoroughly drawn to him, the tongue and hand will not depart from him. If the heart once set forward for God, all the members will follow after: the mouth will praise, the ears will attend to him, the eye will watch him, the feet will go after him; all the parts, like dutiful handmaids, in their places, will wait on their mistress. There was a great master among the Jews, which bid his scholars to consider and tell him, What was the best thing, or the best way, in which a man should always keep? One said, A good companion was the best thing in the world. Another said, A good neighbour was the best thing he could wish. A third said, A wise man, or one that could foresee future things. A fourth said, A good eye, that is, a liberal disposition. At last came one Eleazer, and he said, A good heart is better than them all. True, said the master, thou hast comprehended in two words all that the rest have said; for a good heart will make a man both contented, and a good companion, and a good neighbour, and help him to foresee things that are to come, that he may know what is on his part to be done. Indeed, without this there can be no godliness; all professions and performances are but a show, a shadow; and where there is this, there is all godliness in all manner of conversation. As the king of France said of Dover, that it was the key of England, and if his son, who then invaded the Britons, had not that, he had nothing; so it may be said of the heart, it is the key of the whole man,—it opens and shuts the door to godliness and wickedness,—and if grace hath not this, it hath nothing. The philosopher, when he would persuade the king to settle his residence in the midst of his dominions, and thereby keep all his people the better in subjection, took a bull's hide ready tanned, upon which, when he stood on any side of it, still it rose up on the other; but when he stood on the middle, he kept down all alike. The only way to subdue sin is to do it in the heart; that commands all;

otherwise, though one unruly passion may be kept down, another will rise up.

The heart is the great workhouse where all sin is wrought, before it is exposed to open view. It is the mint where evil thoughts are coined, before they are current in our words or actions: 'Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts,' Mat. xv. 19. That is the nest in which those hornets breed. The heart is the original of sinful words, as well as sinful thoughts: 'Out of the heart proceed false witness, blasphemies,' Mat. xv. 19. They were in the heart before ever they were in the tongue. It is said of the weasel, that it conceives at the ear, and brings forth at the mouth. Every sinner conceiveth at the heart, what he brings forth at the mouth. Such stinking breath comes from rotten inwards. The heart is the vessel of poisonous liquor, the tongue is but the tap to broach it: 'Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh.' The heart is the forge also where all our evil works, as well as words, are hammered out: 'Out of the heart proceed murders, and thefts, and adulteries, and fornications,' Mat. xv. 19. You will say that murders and thefts are hand sins, and that adulteries and fornication belong to the eye and outward parts of the body; but, alas! the heart is the womb wherein they are conceived and bred. The outward parts are but the midwives to deliver the mother of those monsters, and to bring them into the world: 'An evil man, out of the evil treasure in his heart, bringeth forth evil things.' There is no sin but is dressed in the withdrawing-room of the heart, before it appear on the stage of the life.

Apollodorus dreamed one night that the Scythians had taken him and flayed off his skin, with an intent to boil him; and as he was lifting into the cauldron, his heart said unto him, It is I that have brought thee to all this.[1] There is a real truth in this, that the heart brings men both to all their sins, and all their sufferings. As the chaos had the seed of all creatures, and wanted nothing but the motion of the good Spirit to produce them; so the heart hath the seed of all evil, and wanteth nothing but the motion of the evil spirit, and a fit opportunity to bring it forth.

It is in vain to go about a holy life till the heart be made holy. The pulse of the hand beats well or ill, according to the state of the heart, and the inward vital parts. Our earthly members can never be mortified, unless the body of sin and death be destroyed. The foul bird of sin must be killed in the nest, the heart, or it can never be thrown on the dunghill, die in the life. Therefore the

[1] Plut. Moral.

Holy Ghost calls on men to take away the cause, if they would have the effect to cease: 'O Jerusalem, wash thy heart from wickedness.' 'Cleanse your hearts ye sinners, and purify your hands ye double-minded;' first the heart cleansed, then the hands, Jer. iv. 14; James iv. 8. If the chinks of the ship are unstopped, it will be to no purpose to labour at the pump. It is not rubbing or scratching will cure the itch, but the blood, whose corruption is the cause of it, must be purified. When the water is foul at the bottom, no wonder that scum and filth appear at the top. There is no way to stop the issue of sin, but by drying up the matter that feeds it.

As Moses cast the tree into the bitter waters, and sweetened the springs; and as Elijah cast salt into the fountain, and thereby healed the waters; so the salt of grace must be cast into the spring, the fountain of the heart, or the streams of the life will never be sweet. Till trees are grafted, and their nature altered, all the fruit they bring forth is wild and harsh, and little worth; till the Christian is grafted into Christ, and a new and another nature be infused into him, all his fruit is unsavoury and unacceptable to God, vain and unprofitable to himself. Such a one is like a cypress tree, fair to look on, but barren. Like a painter, he may make a great stir about the colours and shadows of things, the form of godliness, and shew all his wit, and art, and skill in expressing the outside, but wholly neglecteth the substance, and contemneth the inward parts, the power thereof.

There be several things which may help to make the life fair in the eyes of men, but nothing will make it amiable in the eyes of God, unless the heart be changed and renewed. Indeed all the medicines which can be applied, without the sanctifying work of the Spirit, though they may cover, they can never cure, the corruption and diseases of the soul. The best man, without this, is like a serpent painted as it were without, but poisonous within; as the herb biscort, he may have smooth and plain leaves, but a crooked root; or as a pill, be gilded on the outside, when the whole mass and body of it is bitterness. It is one thing to be angry with sin upon a sudden discontent, as a man may be with his wife, whom he loves dearly, and another thing to hate sin, as that which we abhor to behold, and endeavour to destroy. A filthy heart, like a foul body, may seem for a while to be in good plight; but when the heats and colds of temptations appear, it will bewray itself. Some insects lie in a deep sleep all the winter, stir not, make no noise, that one would think them dead; but when the weather alters, and

the sun shines, they revive and shew themselves; so though lusts may seem dead in an unregenerate man, they are only laid asleep, and when opportunity is, will revive. Shame may hide sin, but it will not heal sin; corruption often lieth secret in the heart, when shame hindereth it from breaking out in scabs and blotches in the life. Some court holiness as hard in show, as Saul did Samuel, to be honoured before the people, when, like him, they hate it in their hearts.

Fear may do somewhat to curb a vitiated nature, but it cannot cure it. The bear dares hardly touch his desired honey, for fear of the stinging of the bees; the dog forbears the meat on the table, not because he doth not love it, but because he is afraid of the cudgel. Many leave some sin in their outward actions, as Jacob parted with Benjamin, for fear they should starve if they kept it, who are as fond of it as the patriarch of his child. This inward love of sin is indeed its life, and that which is most dangerous and deadly to the soul. As an imposthume is most perilous for being inward, and private rocks under water, split more vessels than those that appear above water; so sin, reigning only in the heart, is oftentimes more hurtful than when it rageth in the life. Such civil persons go to hell without much disturbance, being asleep in sin, yet not snoring to the disquieting of others; they are so far from being jogged or awaked, that they are many times praised and commended.

Example, custom, and education, may also help a man to make a fair show in the flesh, but not to walk after the Spirit. They may prune and lop sin, but never stub it up by the roots. All that these can do, is to make a man like a grave, green and flourishing on the surface and superficies, when within there is nothing but noisomeness and corruption. It hath often appeared that those means which the great moralists have used to bridle their lusts and passions, have rather, like strong scents to epileptic bodies, raised them than recovered them. Indeed, if the chief fault were not in the vital parts, then outward applications might be effectual; but when the heart, and lungs, and inwards, are all corrupted, plasters applied to the face, or hands, or thighs, or sides, will do little good. When the fault is in the foundation of a house, it cannot be mended by plastering or rough-cast. A leopard may be flayed, but he is spotted still, because the spots are not only in the skin, but in the flesh, and bones, and sinews, and most inward parts. When the disease is accidental, as to lose the sight by the small-pox, or the like, there the physic of morality may be advantageous; but where the disease is natural, as in the man that was born blind, there

physic will do no good—a miracle alone must restore such a one to sight.

Unsanctified persons at best act from themselves, and therefore for themselves. As the kite, they may spread their wings and soar aloft, as if they touched heaven, when at the highest their eyes are upon their prey upon earth. Lucullus told his guests, when he had feasted them liberally, and they had admired his bounty in their costly entertainment, Something, my friends, is for your sakes, but the greatest part is for Lucullus's own sake. An unconverted person may do something, some small matter for the sake of religion, from common gifts of illumination, &c., but the most that he doth is for his own sake, for that credit or profit which he expecteth thereby. If anything be enjoined which thwarteth his interest, he will reply with Ajax, when commanded to spare Ulysses, In other things I will obey the gods, but not in this.

Reader, make sure of this inward change; otherwise, though thy conversation may be specious, it can never be gracious, nor thy profession durable. If the house be built on loose earth, it will never stand long. When the principles are variable and uncertain, so will the practices be. If the arguments upon which thou takest upon thee the livery of Christ, and the grounds of thy engagement in his service, be not firm and constant, the love of God, and hope of eternal life, &c., such as the world and flesh cannot overtop, thou wilt throw up thy profession, and leave thy master, when thou art offered in thy blind judgment a better service, though it be but the pleasures of sin for a season, with eternal pains at the end of them, for thy soul, and Saviour, and eternal salvation. How well may he prove a bankrupt, who is worse than naught when he first sets up? I wonder not that many professors disown the Lord Jesus, when they were ignorant why they at any time owned him. He that takes up religion on trust, will lay it down when it brings him into trouble. As the celandine springeth and floweth at the coming of the summer birds, but withereth at their departure; and the corn, that promiseth a good harvest in the blade, is blasted in the ear, because its root is withered and naught; so the person that hath no sound foundation, though he seem to look high, will never hold out.

The turnsole makes a show for a time, with white velvet leaves, and yellow flowers, but fadeth away without bringing forth any fruit. Christ tells us, some which heard the word, though for a season they rejoiced in it, when tribulation came because of the word, were offended at it, because they had no root.

To prevent that sad apostasy which many are guilty of to their eternal undoing, friend, consider seriously beforehand, what it will cost thee to be a Christian indeed. A foolish builder, that undertakes to raise a structure as high as heaven, and pondereth not the charge thereof, gives over before he hath finished it, and so loseth all his expense and labour. As in marriage, one that is wise, and considereth the person, his portion, and his precepts, with the cares and burdens that are incident to that condition, for such must have trouble in the flesh, and after this, upon mature deliberation, accepteth him for a husband, will stick and cleave to him loyally and faithfully, whatever befalls him; whereas a foolish maid, that huddleth up a match in haste, hand over head, promising herself nothing but delight and pleasure, when she comes to suffer poverty or imprisonment, or disgrace with her husband, repenteth of her bargain, and forsakes the guide of her youth. So the Christian, that hath duly pondered the excellencies in Christ, his misery without Christ, absolute necessity of Christ; what love, and joy, and peace, and endless bliss, God offereth with his Son; what Christ expecteth from all that will be married to him, even the denial of themselves, the taking up of their cross, the contempt of father, mother, wife, children, estate, life, and all for him, and after he hath duly considered all this, gives himself up to Christ, will be faithful unto death, and own the Lord Jesus Christ, whatever it may cost him; when the man that followeth Christ for the loaves, or for fashion, or on a sudden stikes a leagues with him, expecting nothing but comforts and joy in his contracts, will quickly leave him, if called to suffer with him. He that followeth Christ, he knoweth not why, will forsake him, he knoweth not how.

If thou art, reader, to begin this work of entering thyself into Christ's army, I would advise thee to bethink thyself upon what grounds thou engagest in his quarrel; for Christians are not called to their spiritual war for love of fighting, as cocks, that fall to it upon sight of each other. Consider the enemies thou art to fight against, how potent, and crafty, and cruel they are, continually seeking thy destruction. The captain thou art to fight under, how wise he is to direct and command thee, how able to protect and defend thee, how faithful and bountiful to crown and reward thee. The excellency of the cause; it is for thy soul, thy God, thy Saviour, thy salvation. The dangers thou must encounter, and hardships thou wilt be called to endure. The certainty of thy conquest; how impossible it is to miscarry in so just a quarrel, under such an almighty captain, and then lift thyself to fight the good fight of

faith, and fear not but thou shalt be more than a conqueror through him that loves thee.

Secondly, If thou wouldst exercise thyself to godliness, live by faith. The life of faith, it is the only life of holiness; and unbelief is the mother of all apostasy. When God would persuade Abraham to sincere and singular godliness, he doth it by offering him sure footing for his faith: 'I am God All-sufficient,' or the Almighty God; 'walk before me, and be thou perfect,' Gen. xvii. 1; knowing that, unless his faith were firm, his steps could never be even; if he had not believed God's power, he could not be evangelically perfect. And hence that father of the faithful became so eminent in obedience, from the strength of his faith. It is said of him, Isa. xli. 2, that he came to the foot of God. That child was dutiful indeed, that, when his father did but stamp with his foot, left whatever he was about, though it were never so delightful or gainful to him, and ran to his father to know and obey his commands. Thus truly did Abraham, when God called him to turn his back upon his relations, and the place of his nativity; nay, to sacrifice his Isaac, the child of the promise, as well as of his love; he did not question God's pleasure, nor quarrel with his precepts, but obeyed them presently, and all from his faith. His strong faith caused strong obedience, Heb. xi. It is observable that all the noble and heroic acts of obedience of the Lord's worthies, mentioned in that little Book of Martyrs, were performed under the conduct and command of faith.

Faith is one of the best antidotes against the poison of profaneness, and one of the greatest helps to holiness. None are more faithful to God than they who have most faith in God. They who believe, will be careful to maintain good works, Titus iii. 8. As the natural heat is the life of the body, and as that increaseth with the radical moisture, strength and health abound; so faith is the life of the soul—as that is strong or weak, his godliness is more or less. He that is highest in affiance is highest in obedience. This is the strength of the soul: according to man's strength, such is his walk, either straight or stumbling; according to a man's faith, such is his life, either even or crooked.

1. Faith destroyeth sin.

2. It enableth to live to God.

1. It killeth sin. If the pulse of a Christian's hand or life beat uneven, it is because his faith, which is his heart, doth falter. This is the shield of the soul, which secures it against all assaults and dangers. Other pieces of the Christian's armour are serviceable to

defend particular parts of the new man, as the girdle of truth, the loins; righteousness, the breast; the gospel of peace, the feet; but faith is a shield, moveable at pleasure, and surroundeth and guardeth the whole man: 'With favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield,' Ps. v. 12. Faith secureth the head from evil principles. What sense denieth, and reason understandeth not, faith believeth. Aristotle, reading Moses, concerning the creation, is reported to say, *Egregie dicis, domine Moses, sed quomodo probas?* Thou speakest nobly, but how dost thou prove it? The answer to him is easy, 'By faith we believe that the worlds were made of God,' Heb. xi. 3.

Faith clears up the understanding, and scattereth the mists of error. The presence of this sun disperseth those clouds. Faith secureth the heart from evil purposes. It is the besom that sweepeth out such dust, and keeps the heart clean: 'Having their hearts purified by faith,' Acts xv. 9. Faith entertaineth the King of saints into the heart; it sets him on the throne, and these traitors fly before him. His presence makes these rebels to hide their heads. Who ever could find in his heart to hug sin, whilst he was viewing, by faith, his bleeding Saviour! Faith secureth the hand from evil practices. The martyrs chose the flames rather than the denial of their Master, and all because of their faith. Those worthies of the Lord, of whom the world was not worthy, through faith stopped the mouths of lion-like lusts, quenched the violence of hellish fires, were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection, Heb. xi. 33–35. 'By faith we stand,' 2 Cor. i. 24. As a soldier, under the protection of his shield, stands his ground, and doth his duty, notwithstanding the shot that are made against him; so a Christian, under the protection of faith, keeps his place, and mindeth his work, whatsoever opposition he meets with. Faith, like Joab, stabbeth this Abner under the fifth rib; it wounds sin mortally. Hope, like Saul, hath slain its thousands, but faith, like David, its ten thousands. Whole armies of lusts have turned their backs at the sight of this warrior. By faith the walls of Jericho fall down. Whilst unbelief liveth, no sin will die. All iniquity sheltereth itself under the banner of infidelity. If once the banks of faith be broken down, a flood of wickedness will rush and flow in. What made Abraham deny his wife, and expose her to such temptations and wickedness, but unbelief? What made Isaac tread in his father's steps, and leave Rebekah to the heathen's lust, but unbelief? What made David dishonour his God, by his uncomely carriage before Achish, and injure his soul by

his unholy language, that he should one day perish by the hand of Saul, but unbelief? What made Peter deny and forswear his Master, but unbelief? These tares were sown by the enemy, when the husbandman, faith, was asleep: had they believed the power and faithfulness of God to defend them in their dangers and distresses, without their lies, and his grace and bounty to reward them largely, for all their sufferings for his sake; had they believed that God, when he called them to straits, would, without any sinful means, have brought them off safe on earth, or safe to heaven, they would never have used such sinful shifts for their own safety. Faith would secure the soul against all those temptations, and prevent such sinister and sinful doings. He that believeth, maketh not haste. He will patiently wait God's leisure, and submit to his pleasure, and not venture upon forbidden courses, and unlawful ways, to deliver himself out of distress.

Unbelief is the dung which makes the soil of corrupt nature so fruitful in the unfruitful works of darkness. Whence cometh such immoderate love of a perishing world, but from want of faith and belief of that transcendent glory that is to be revealed? Whence cometh such dulness and deadness in holy duties, but from unbelief, either of the holiness and jealousy of that God with whom we have to do, or of his goodness and mercy, that his reward will pay the charge of diligence in his work? Whence comes such cozening, and cheating, and overreaching in dealings with men, but from distrust of God's power and providence, as if he could not, or would not, spread a table for his children in the most barren wilderness? Whence comes that impatience and murmuring in adversity, but from want of faith, which would encourage the heart in the Lord his God, in the saddest estate, and when the fig-tree doth not blossom, nor the vine yield its fruit, enable the soul to rejoice in the Lord, and be glad in the rock of his salvation? Whence cometh such pride and carnal confidence in prosperity, but because men believe not the meanness, and vanity, and emptiness of riches, and that divine mercy, not the merits of men, are the original of them? There is no sin so monstrous, but unbelief will venture upon it. He that believeth not, will never be allured by divine promises, nor affrighted at divine threatenings, nor obey divine precepts, nor submit to divine providences. As Cicero said of parricide, I may say of unbelief, It is a teeming vice, a well of wickedness; many sins are bound up in it. No wonder the apostle gives such a serious warning, and so strict a charge, against infidelity, as the mother and nurse of all apostasy: 'Take heed lest there be in any

of you an evil heart of unbelief, whereby ye depart away from the living God,' Heb. iii. 12. The superstitious pagans thought that their idol Vibilia kept them from erring out of their way; the religious Christian knoweth, by experience, that his faith keeps him within the limits of his duty. Faith ingrafts the soul into Christ, and into the fellowship of his death, by which 'the old man is crucified, and the body of sin destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin,' Rom. vi. 5-8. For therefore did Christ bear our sins in his body on the tree, that we might become dead to sin, 1 Pet. ii. 24.

Faith enableth the soul to conquer sin, by enabling it to overcome the three grand provocations to sin: the world, the flesh, and the wicked one. There is neither of these enemies but faith hath wounded mortally.

(1.) Faith enableth to overcome the world. The world, indeed, hath conquered millions; the greatest soldiers have been slain by it. Alexander could subdue the nations in it, but could not subdue his affections to it. As great a conqueror as he was over it, he was its slave and vassal; for his ambition was still larger than his dominions. But faith, clothing the Christian with the sun, helps him to trample this moon under his feet: 'This is your victory over the world, even your faith,' 1 John v. 4.

The world hath two faces—the one ugly and deformed, to affright the saint; the other comely and painted, to allure him to sin; but faith seeth how pitiful, only touching the body, her threatenings are, and how poor, only skin deep, her promises are, and makes the soul to disdain both.

It was by faith that Luther could say, *Contemptus a me Romanus et favor, et furor,* I scorn both Rome's favour, and Rome's fury. The world's furnace and music are much alike to a believer; he is blind and deaf, nay, dead to both. The special object of faith is the cross of Christ, whereby, saith the apostle, I am crucified to the world, and the world to me. Tickle a dead man, or lance him, it is all one, he is sensible of neither. As Fabricius, the noble Roman, told Pyrrhus, who one day tempted him with gold, and the next day sought to terrify him with elephants, I was not yesterday moved with your money, nor to-day with your beasts. So Basil, when first offered preferment, and afterward threatened with imprisonment, if he would not deny Christ, and turn Arian, to this purpose answered the messenger, Such babies of preferment are fit to catch children with, and such bugbears of bonds and imprisonment may fright your tender gallants and courtiers. Faith

enableth the Christian to mount up to heaven, and thereby secures him from the baits and shots, the snares and lime-twigs, which attend him on earth. Homer saith Ulysses caused himself to be bound to the mast of the ship, and every one of his fellows' ears to be stopped with wax, that they might not hearken to the songs of the syrens, and so be drowned in the sea. Faith fastens the soul to Christ, and so ravisheth its ears with the glad tidings of pardon, and peace, and eternal life, that it is deaf to the world's music.

[1.] Faith enableth the soul to overcome the affrightments of the world. Faith, like blown bladders, keepeth the soul from sinking in deep waters. It is a target under which a soul is free from the hurt, though not from the smart, of evil. It is the ark wherein he rides triumphing, when the windows from above are opened, and pour down, and the floods from beneath are broken up. In this strong tower the soul finds shelter. Faith, like Joseph, layeth up in a time of plenty against a time of scarcity, in a day of prosperity against a day of adversity, and so feareth it the less.

Faith sheweth the Christian a place of refuge in the time of trouble. He shall hide thee, saith faith, in the secret of his presence, *i.e.*, cover thee with the warm wings of his providence. He shall keep thee secret in his pavilion—an allusion to princes' retiring rooms, which are sacred and secure places for their favourites. Nature teacheth all creatures to run in distress to that which they count their defence. The conies run to the rocks, the goats to the hills, the ravenous beasts to their dens, the child to his mother's arms. This grace discovereth to the soul a rock, a refuge, a fort, a fortress, a high tower, which makes him fearless of the world's threatenings and bugbears. The lame and the blind, those most shiftless creatures, when they had got the stronghold of Zion over their heads, scorned the host of David, 2 Sam. v. 6, 7. The Egyptians that dwell in the fens are much troubled with gnats, therefore they sleep in high towers, whither those insects cannot fly. 'The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run unto it, and are safe,' Prov. xviii. 10, Such a soul is like a strong tree, which no wind can shake, or like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved. Therefore he can sing when unbelievers quake and tremble: 'Though the earth be troubled, though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, though the waters roar, and the mountains shake, yet we will not fear. The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge,' Ps. xlvi. 2, 3, 7, and xci. 2. Faith is like the cork in the net; when the lead would sink the net, the cork keeps it above water. This faith is the anchor of the soul,

both sure and steadfast, entering into that within the veil, and so stayeth the saint against all the winds and waves of affliction. Faith or belief of the resurrection, and that happiness which then should be enjoyed, was that which enabled Paul to die daily, and to fight with beasts at Ephesus, 1 Cor. xv. 31, 32.

In the greatest distress, faith can see deliverance; and when it is at the greatest distance, salute it, as Abraham did Christ's day, afar off. When the weather is cloudy, it can see the heaven begin to clear, and notwithstanding his present pain and poverty, cause the Christian to rejoice in his hope of bliss and glory. The eye of faith, looking to the recompense of reward, seeth afflictions with the Israel of God, much more eligible than the pleasures of sin. Symphorianus,[1] a Christian young man, after he was almost scourged to death, being dragged to execution at Augustodunum, met his mother, not crying, or tearing her hair, but like a holy lady thus comforting him, Son, my son, I say, remember life eternal, look up to heaven. Life is not taken from thee, but exchanged for a better. At which words of his mother, he went on willingly to the block, and exposed his throat to the fatal axe. One of the Dutch martyrs, feeling the flame coming to him, said, Oh what a small pain is this, to heaven! Our blessed Saviour had an eye to the joy set before him, and thereby was encouraged to endure the cross, and despise the shame. Indeed, if faith spring a leak, then the waters break in, and the Christian sinks apace, as we see in Peter's denial of his Master.

As faith in the promises, so also faith in the threatenings, makes the Christian a conqueror over the world's affrightments: where the world threatens bonds, and whips, and dungeons, and death, if the Christian will not sin against God, and begins to stagger the soul: Take heed what thou dost, saith faith, for God threateneth fire, and brimstone, and chains, and blackness of darkness for ever, as the wages of all sin. Is the wrath of an infinite God not more to be feared than of weak dying men? Is the pains of a violent death, which will quickly be over, and the most the world can do against thee, comparable to the pains of eternal death? And thus faith, by the terror of this great ordnance, drowns the noise of those small pieces, that the soul is deaf to their report.

[2.] Faith enableth the soul to overcome the allurements of the world. If the world cannot terrify the saint with its fiery furnace to disown and deny his Saviour, it will seek to enchant him with its music, and thereby to make him deaf to the call and commands

[1] Drexel., Consid. Æternit.

of Christ: thus it served Joseph. When it could not prevail on the left hand, by selling him for a slave, it trieth him on the right hand, by setting a Delilah to tickle him with pleasure; but by faith he saw the hook under the bait, and durst not nibble at it, much less swallow it. Though the world, like Jezebel, painteth her face, and tireth her hair, to render her amiable and lovely, and as a strumpet, sheweth her naked breasts of pleasure and profit, to entice the believer to go a-whoring after her; yet he vieweth by faith the deformity of her person, under all her daubery, and the dregginess and deceitfulness of her pleasures, notwithstanding their show of clearness, and so rejects them with scorn and disdain. Pliny saith of Cato that he took as much pleasure in the honours he denied as in those that he enjoyed. The believer can glory more in his refusal of glory for Christ, than unbelievers in all their preferments. Indeed, if the Christian did consult with sense, or carnal reason, he would take the world's present money; but the believer doth not consult with flesh and blood, like wise Abigail. Knowing how much it will conduce to his advantage, he can part with his estate for God, and never make those Nabals privy to the design, lest they should hinder it.

Besides, faith discovers pure rivers of pleasures, more noble and excellent delights, to be the portion of those that refuse to grate their teeth with such kennel water. As man is a rational creature, he would sell his wares to them that will give most. Now faith sheweth how infinitely God outbids the world. Sense saith, The world offereth fair—it offereth comforts, suitable to thy flesh, such as they desire, and it offereth ready money, present possession: but saith faith, God offereth thee better; the comforts he offereth are more excellent, being suitable, not, as the world's, to a carnal, brutish nature, but to a heavenly, divine soul, and more durable, being eternal, when the pleasures of sin are but for a season. He that hopes for no better market, will take the present money offered him; but he that is assured of greater gains, will refuse the lesser. An unbeliever, who expects no better bargain than what this life affords him, may well take up with present pay, whatever it be; but the believer, who seeth the glory to be revealed, and fulness of joy in heaven, and is assured that if he be faithful unto death, he shall receive that eternal crown of life, turns his eyes off the honours and comforts of this beggarly world. Those stars of creature joys do all disappear in the presence of this sun. Gold bears little sway with the soul that knoweth his title to the new Jerusalem, that is paved with gold, in which gold is trampled under foot.

Those birds that fly aloft in the firmament, are not so easily snared by the fowler's gins. Though the things of this world were glorious in his eyes, during his estate of unbelief, yet now he hath discerned a world beyond the moon, and sent faith as a spy to search and coast that country, which hath brought word back, that it is a good land, flowing with milk and honey, and in it there is want of nothing, they have no glory, by reason of that glory that doth so infinitely exceed. When a man is below, things above seem small; the great stars, that are bigger than the earth, seem not so big as a bushel, and things below seem great: but when a man is above, as upon the top of a steeple, then things below seem little—he beholdeth men like grasshoppers. Were he conveyed to the highest hill in the world, men would not be discerned; great kingdoms would be but small cottages. Unbelief sets a man below, here on earth, and so the things of heaven are little in his eye; but faith soars aloft, it carrieth the Christian up to heaven, and then the whole earth is but a small spot in his eye. Joseph bids the patriarchs, 'Regard not your stuff, for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours:' so saith faith to the Christian, Regard not the lumber and rubbish of this world, for all the great and good things of the other world are thine. Faith gives the soul a taste, the first-fruits of heaven: 'And as no man having drunk old wine, desireth new, for he saith the old is better;' so no man, having tasted the wine of heaven's pleasures, desires carnal delights. A pilgrim travelling to Jerusalem, saith one, came to a city where he saw a goodly training and mustering; there he had a mind to stay, but that he remembered that was not Jerusalem. He came to another city, where he saw gallant sports and pastimes; there he had some goodwill to abide, but that he remembered it was not Jerusalem. He came to a third, where were goodly buildings, fair ladies, curious music, &c., where also he had some thoughts of settling, but still he remembered it was not Jerusalem. So the believer, when the world offereth him great treasures, high honours, &c., may, through the subtlety of his flesh, have a mind to embrace them, only seeing by faith Jerusalem, where are greater treasures, higher honours, he slights and rejects them. By faith Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, esteeming the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he had an eye to the recompense of reward.

Faith makes things future, present; it looketh into heaven and saith, as David, before he had conquered those places, Gilead is mine, Manasseh is mine; heaven is mine, eternal life is mine, ful-

ness of joy is mine, that kingdom in comparison of which this whole world is a dunghill is mine, because God hath sworn by his holiness, that he will not lie unto his David ; and whilst the soul by faith seeth and is assured of these felicities, for their sake it can trample under foot the world's largest offers.

(2.) Faith enableth the Christian to conquer Satan. Though the wicked one be full of power and policy, yet faith makes him flee like a coward. It is said of the crocodile, that he flieth if resisted, but followeth those that fear and flee from him; truly so doth Satan: James iv. 7, 'Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.' But how must he be resisted? the apostle Peter answers that question, 'Whom resist steadfastly in the faith,' 1 Pet. v. 9. The crocodile cannot endure the sight or smell of saffron, therefore in Egypt they sow saffron to keep him away. Faith is this saffron, Cant. iv. 14, which drives away the devil. Faith, like little David, wounds the great Goliath of hell. 'They overcame him (meaning the devil) by the blood of the Lamb.' The wild bull, say naturalists, cannot endure a red colour, therefore the hunter putteth on red garments, and standeth before a tree, which the bull runneth against with all his might, and the hunter stepping aside, his horns stick fast in the tree, whereby he is taken. The Christian, by faith in the blood of Christ, overcometh those infernal spirits who thought to overcome him. This is the only holy water that will fright away the devil. Our blessed Saviour, in his speech to Peter, acquaints us how to subdue Satan: 'Peter, Peter, Satan hath desired to winnow thee as wheat is winnowed, but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.' Which words imply, that whilst Peter's faith stood firm, he should not forsake Christ; whilst that was up, he could not be down; his faith flagged before his courage failed, or he himself fell so foully. A tree is soon felled when the root is once loosened; faith roots the soul in Christ, and therein his safety consists; but as his faith fails, so he is loosened from Christ, and thereby in danger of falling. The Christian's strength lieth in his faith, as Samson's in his hair; if the uncircumcised one can deprive us of this, he may make sport enough with us. Hence it is that Satan's chiefest guns are shot against the royal fort of faith, knowing that that commandeth all; and if he can make a breach there, he fears not but to enter with success. The first mine which he ever sprang, to blow up the first Adam and his wife, and in them the whole race of mankind, was by weakening their faith: 'Hath God said, In the day ye eat thereof, ye shall die?' When he came to the second Adam, he endea-

voured to slay him with the same sword: 'If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones,' &c. And without question, his aim was more at Job's faith, than his cattle, or servants, or children; he had a greater intent to have blown down that house of Job's conscience, than that wherein his sons and daughters were feasting.

Therefore, reader, 'Above all, take the shield of faith, whereby thou mayest quench the fiery darts of the wicked one,' Eph. vi. 16. Goats in the island of Crete, when they are stricken with a dart, do seek for the herb dittany, which will cause the dart to fall out.. Truly, such juice hath faith, that it makes all the darts which Satan shoots at the Christian ineffectual.

(3.) Faith enableth to conquer the flesh. The great apostle, who lived by faith, brought under his body, and crucified the flesh. Faith seeth the safety of the body to consist in its subordination to the soul, and that the only way to save the life, is at God's call to lose it. By faith Abraham left his kindred and country, and obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither he went, Heb. xi. 8. Indeed, the flesh is the worst enemy of the three—partly in that it is so near us, always about us, so that we can as well fly from ourselves as from it. A traitor in the bedchamber, is much more dangerous than one in open arms against us in the field. A snake in the bosom, is like to do more hurt than one under the grass; partly in that it knoweth our minds exactly, and so can temper its poison suitable to our palates; but faith can discover its secret conspiracies, and prevent their execution. Though it dig its mines never so closely, and covertly, and craftily, faith will find them out, and countermine them.

2. Faith enableth, as to die to sin, so to live to God. The life of holiness doth so much depend on faith, that it is said to consist wholly in it. The just shall live by his faith. Though he cannot live by sense, that upon which he lives being invisible; nor by reason, because his food is supernatural; yet he can live by faith, and make a good living of it too. As the body lives by the soul, so religion lives by faith. A mortal wound in faith, lets out the heart blood of all holiness. It is faith that actuates and animates the new creature. Faith puts him upon high designs, and holy enterprises, for God and his own soul. David saith, 'I believe, therefore have I spoken.' It may be said of a Christian, he believeth, therefore he speaks so much of God, for God, and to God. He believeth the unquestionable certainty, incomparable excellency, and eternity of that reward which is set before him, and therefore

he prayeth, and watcheth, and readeth, and heareth, and denieth himself, and worketh night and day that he may attain it. Ferdinando of Arragon, believing the report of Columbus, concerning the richness of the Indian mines, and the likelihood of his possessing them, was at great cost and charge in sending out men in ships, and made them venture their lives, and labour hard to get those golden and silver veins. Faith believeth the report which the gospel makes of the glory to be revealed, and the unsearchable riches in Christ, and the likelihood, nay, certainty of his enjoying them, if he will but strive and labour, and use those means which God hath appointed; and this puts the soul upon its greatest industry and integrity, in the performance of what the word requireth, in order thereunto, and a resolution to obtain them, whatever it cost, or to die in the undertaking.

It is by the sap, which from the root is derived through the bark to the branches, that makes them fruitful; it is from the strength which faith derives from Christ, that the Christian becomes so abundant in holiness. Cut off the bark, and the tree withereth; take away faith, and no more good works. The extension of the branches, ariseth from the intension of the sap; and how shall that be conveyed but by the bark? Christ, like Joseph, keeps the granaries, wherein is abundance of soul-food, and faith unlocks those storehouses, and takes out supplies. As Pharaoh, when the Egyptians cried to him for bread, said, 'Go ye to Joseph, and what he saith to you, do;' so God saith to Christians that call on him for grace, Go ye to Christ by faith, and he will relieve you. It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell. Here is—

(1.) *Fulness*, abundance; not a drop, or a small degree of living water.

(2.) *All* fulness, a redundance; the fulness of a spring, a fountain, not of a vessel.

(3.) All fulness *dwelling*, abiding there to eternity; running over, and running ever. But you will say, What is a Christian the better for it? I answer, Of his fulness, by faith, we all receive grace for grace. As a pipe from the river supplieth the house upon all occasions, and the several offices therein with water; so doth faith supply the Christian with grace from Christ, answerable to his several exigencies and necessities. Indeed, all the graces act valiantly in their several places, under the command of this general. Hence, though fear, and love, and heavenly-mindedness, were specially operative in many of the patriarchs' actions and passions for God, yet still the crown is set upon the head of faith, under

whose banner and conduct they fought, Heb. xi. *per tot.* When this champion, like Goliath, is vanquished, the other graces, as the Philistines, are put to the rout. As dark clouds obscure the glorious stars, so doth unbelief blemish the lustre of a Christian's graces. If this shepherd, faith, be smitten, other graces, like sheep, are scattered. If this grace keep the field, the rest always keep their ground. The length of the days depends upon the shining of the sun; as this shines more or less, so the days are longer or shorter. The degrees and measures of other graces depend exceedingly upon this grace. The branches blossom answerable to the sap which they receive from the root. Other graces bud and blow according to the sap which they receive from faith.

For example sake;—

[1.] Repentance is more or less according to the degrees of faith. It is the fiducial apprehension of divine love that mollifieth the stony heart. None mourn so much as they who apprehend God a father. The hot beams of divine grace and favour, by faith united in the soul, thaw the most icy heart. They shall see him whom they have pierced, *i.e.*, with an eye of faith, and mourn for him as one that mourneth for his only child. Peter saw Christ's love in his look, and then went out and wept bitterly.

[2.] Humility. We are never lower in our own eyes than when faith assures us that we are high in God's favour. The centurion's humility seems to keep equal pace with his faith. Though Christ saith of his faith, 'I have not found so great, no, not in Israel;' 'Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee.' When Nathan brought David word that God had a great respect for him, and would build him a sure house for ever, he presently crieth out, 'What am I? and what is my father's house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?' &c., 2 Sam. vii. 18.

[3.] Love. The fire of love flames more or less according to the fuel which faith provides: 'To whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much.' The knowledge of a pardon granted by such a Lord, who hath all the reason in the world to loathe the soul, turns it into a lump of love.

[4.] Joy. Faith broacheth the pipe of the promises, and presenteth that wine which rejoiceth the heart of the new man: 'In whom believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory,' 1 Pet. i. 8.

[5.] Patience. He that believeth his bonds are good, that his

estate is in safe hands, and that his forbearance doth abundantly increase it, will wait quietly for the day of payment. He that believeth, maketh not haste. None quarrel or fret, but from want of faith: 'Run with patience the race set before you, looking at Jesus.' If the Christian be weak, faith will give him the staff of the word to lean on; if he be weary, faith will shew him his journey's end. Lo, yonder is heaven, saith faith; hold out a little longer, your work is almost done. As the eagle by stretching herself towards the sun, through its heat hath her old feathers fallen off, new ones growing in their places, and her strength renewed; so the Christian cleaving to Jesus Christ, the Sun of righteousness, by faith reneweth his strength, as the eagle, runneth and is not weary, walketh and is not faint. It is reported of the crystal, that there is a virtue in it to quicken all other precious stones; when it toucheth them, it puts a lustre and brightness on them. It is true of faith, it hath a virtue in it to enliven and quicken all other graces. These stars have the greatest influence, when in conjunction with this sun.

As the philosopher saith of water, ἄριστον μὲν ὕδωρ, It is of all things the best, most sovereign, and precious, because it is of universal influence in the life of man; so I may say of faith, it is of all graces most excellent, in regard of the universality of its influence upon all duties, graces, providences, ordinances.

It is by faith that prayer becomes so prevalent: 'Whatsoever ye ask of the Father, believing, ye shall receive,' John xvi. 23. An unbelieving prayer, is a messenger without a tongue; no wonder if he despatch not his errand, Heb. xi. 6.

It is by faith that Scripture is so powerful. This sword of the Spirit doth no execution, save in the hand of faith: 'The word did not profit them, not being mingled with faith in them that heard it,' Heb. iv. 2.

It is by faith that the Lord's supper becomes so nourishing and strengthening. This is the hand that receiveth that flesh which is meat indeed, this is the mouth that eats it, this is the stomach that digests it; without this thou mayest receive the elements, but not the sacrament, 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25. Unbelievers, like wasps, may sit upon the tops of these flowers, and seem to gather honey, but, alas! they are far from any such thing.

It is by faith that crosses are turned into comforts, and afflictions into mercies. This, like Mithridates, can digest poison, and get strength from the wrath and rage of men and devils, Phil. i. 19; Heb. xi. 38.

It is by faith that water is turned into wine, temporal mercies into spiritual advantages; faith worketh by love, and draweth men with the cords of love.

It is by faith that men are so fruitful in their lives, Heb xi. 32, 33; and so cheerful in their deaths, Rom. viii. 37–39. O reader, above all thy gettings, get faith, and above all thy keepings, keep faith; for it must be faith that must keep thee from falling in an hour of temptation, and from fainting in an hour of persecution. The unbeliever is fitly called an unreasonable man, because it is unreasonable that the God of truth should not be credited, and that he, to whom it is impossible to lie, should be distrusted; and also an absurd man, because it is absurd for a workman to go without his tools, which he shall every moment have need of. It is said of the serpent, that of all her parts, she is most careful of her head, well knowing that, though she be mangled and cut never so much in her body, yet if her head be whole, that will cure the wounds of all her other parts. Let thy great work be to secure thy faith; if that be whole, all will be well; whatever decays there may be in other graces, this will help them to shoot forth again.

Thirdly, If thou wouldst exercise thyself to godliness, set God always before thine eyes. Subjects will carry themselves handsomely and loyally when they are before their sovereign: they who walk before God, will be upright. His eye is the best marshal to keep the soul in a comely order. Let thine eye be ever on him, whose eye is ever on thee: 'The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good,' Prov. xv. 3. Seneca persuaded his friend Lucilius, for the keeping him within compass, to imagine that some grave man, as Lælius, did still look upon him. Reader, couldst thou walk ever as in God's presence, thou wouldst keep close to his precepts. Consider, therefore, that in all places, in all companies, at all times, the eye of God is on thee, and he takes exact notice of all thy thoughts, words, and actions; that he knoweth thy natural parts: 'In his book were all thy members written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was not one of them;' that he knoweth all thy moral passages: 'Thou understandest my thoughts afar off, and art acquainted with all my ways:' 'There is not a word in my tongue, but thou, O Lord, knowest it altogether.' There is no drawing a curtain between God and thee; he seeth thee through and through, far more perfectly than thou canst the clearest crystal: 'Darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day; to thee the darkness and the light are both alike.' The darkness of the air

may hide thee from men, and the darkness of thine understanding may hide thee from thyself; but there is no darkness nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity can hide themselves from him. Neither the ring of Gyges, nor the helmet of Pluto, can hide thee from God's eye. Observe how strict God is in observing thy ways: 'Thou numberest my steps; dost thou not watch over my sin?' Job xiv. 16. By steps, is understood his inward motions, and outward actions; whatsoever is done either in the retiring room of the heart, or common hall of the life. To number the steps, notes an exact account; we say of a man that goeth very leisurely and softly, such a man telleth his steps. God is said to tell or number our steps, because he is so exact in his observation of, and so severe in his inquisition into, all our thoughts, words, and deeds. He is supposed to be void of shame, that doth not fear to sin before many witnesses. Though thou art in secret, consider, conscience is present, which is a thousand witnesses, and God, who is a thousand consciences. The Italian was somewhat conceited, who wrote a supplication to candle-light, to disclose to him the secrets of his kingdom. It is thought the light of the candle seeth more wickedness than the light of the sun; but to God the day and night, darkness and light, are both alike; he seeth all things, in all places, and at all times.

It was a pretty fancy of one that would have his chamber painted full of eyes, that which way soever he looked, he might still have some eyes upon him; and he fancying himself, according to the moralist's advice, always, *Sub custode et pædagogo*, under the eye of a keeper, might be the more careful of his carriage.[1] And it was a wise answer of Livius Drusus, when an artist offered him so to contrive his house, that he might do what he would, none should see him; No, saith Drusus, contrive it so rather that all may see me, for I am not ashamed to be seen.[2] If the eyes of men make even the vilest to forbear their beloved lusts for a while, that the adulterer watcheth for the twilight, and they that are drunk are drunk in the night, how powerful will the eye and presence of God be with those that fear his anger, and know the sweetness of his favour! Moses forsook the sinful pleasures of Pharaoh's court, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he saw him that was invisible. A good commander causeth good government in a town or city.

[1] A reverend divine had this written in his study, Noli peccare, nam Deus videt; Angeli astant, Diabolus accusabit, Conscientia testabitur, Infernus cruciabit.

[2] Tu vero, si quid in te artis est, ita compone domum meam ut ab omnibus conspici possit.—*Velleius Paterculus.*

This truth wrought home, and set close to the heart, would cause good orders, good government, in it.

The thought of this omnipresence of God will affrighten thee from sin. Gehazi durst not ask or receive any part of Naaman's presents in his master's presence; but when he had got out of Elisha's sight, then he tells his lie, and gives way to his lust. Men never sin more freely than when they presume upon secrecy.[1] 'They break in pieces thy people, O Lord, and afflict thine heritage. They slay the widow and stranger, and murder the fatherless; yet they say, The Lord doth not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it,' Ps. xciv. 5–7. Eliphaz, though falsely, accuseth Job as guilty of the same crime, upon the same account, Job xxii. 5–7, 13, 14. They who shut God out of their hearts, shut him also out of the world, through their atheism, and then are at liberty for all manner of wickedness. They who abounded in abominations said, 'The Lord seeth us not; the Lord hath forsaken the earth,' Ezek. viii. 9–12.

The wise man dissuadeth from wickedness, upon the consideration of God's eye and omniscience: 'And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger? For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings,' Prov. v. 20, 21. Joseph saw God in the room, and therefore durst not yield; but his mistress saw none but Joseph, and so was impudently alluring and tempting him to folly. I have read of two religious men that took contrary courses with two lewd women, whom they were desirous to reclaim from their vicious course of life. One of the men told one of the women that he was desirous to enjoy her company, so it might be with secrecy, and when she had brought him into a close room that none could pry into, he told her, All the bars and bolts here cannot keep God out. The other desired the other woman to company with him openly in the streets, which, when she rejected as a mad request, he told her, It was better to do it in the eyes of a multitude than of God. How doth the adulterer, or drunkard, or thief, when they come abroad at midnight for the satisfaction of their lusts, sneak and steal away when they spy the watch, or any persons who would be witness of their vices! and shall not the presence of that God who hates sin, who is resolved to punish it with hell-flames, make us ashamed or afraid to sin, and dare him to his face?

[1] Turpe quid ausurus, te sine teste time. Magnum nescio quid majusque quam cogitari potest numen est, cui vivendo operam demus. Huic nos approbemus, nam nihil prodest inclusam esse conscientiam, patemus Deo.—*Senec.*

2. The thoughts of this omnipresence of God will quicken thee to holiness. The soldiers of Israel and Judah were prodigal of their blood in the presence of their two generals, 2 Sam. ii. 14. Servants will generally work hard whilst their master stands by and looks on. It is said of Alexander, that his presence caused such courage in his soldiers—*ut illo præsente nullius hostium arma vel inermes timuerunt*—that when he was with them, though they were unarmed, they feared not the weapons of any of their enemies. Our blessed Redeemer exhorteth to prayer in secret, upon this consideration, that God seeth and heareth it, Mat. vi., and to charity in secret, because, though the left hand knoweth not what the right hand doeth, God knoweth what the right hand doeth: 'Your Father which seeth in secret will reward you openly.'

There is a story of Bishop Latimer, that he having in a sermon at court much displeased the king, (Henry VIII.,) was commanded to preach again the next Lord's-day, and to recant his former sermon. According to appointment, he cometh up, and prefaceth to his sermon in this manner: Hugh Latimer, dost thou know this day to whom thou art to speak? even to the high and mighty monarch, the king's most excellent majesty, who can take away thy life if thou offendest; therefore take heed how thou speakest a word which may displease; but, (as if recalling himself, he proceeded,) Hugh, Hugh, dost thou know from whom thou comest, upon whose message thou art sent, and who it is that is present with thee, and beholdeth all thy ways? even that almighty God who can cast body and soul into hell for ever; therefore look about thee, and be sure thou deliverest thy message faithfully. And so he went to his text, and confirmed what he had spoken the day before, and urged it with more vehemency than ordinary. The eye of God, as of the sun, will call the Christian to his work. Those countries that are governed by viceroys seldom flourish or thrive so well as those kingdoms where the prince is present in person. Conscience, God's viceroy, may much quicken a Christian to holiness; but God the prince himself much more. 'I have kept thy precepts,' saith David, 'for all my ways are before thee.'

CHAPTER X.

Means whereby Christians may exercise themselves to godliness: A constant watchfulness, frequent meditation of death, daily performance of sacred duties.

Fourthly, If thou wouldst exercise thyself to godliness, watch over thyself continually. This spiritual watchfulness is the main-guard of the soul, which, if once called off, we lie open to the shot of every enemy. This, like one of the Nethinims, must stand continually porter at the door of our hearts, God's temple, to keep out whatsoever is unclean. Watchfulness is a diligent observation of ourselves in all things, and at all times, that we may please God always. He that watcheth hath his eyes in his head, according to the wise man's phrase, and seeth, as the Chinese say of themselves, with both eyes. David expresseth it fitly: 'I said, I will take heed to my ways,' Ps. xxxix. 1—*i.e.*, I will ponder my paths, and consider where I set my feet, lest I should tread awry. Without this wariness there is no safe walking. Secure Laish is made a prey to their enemies, Judges xviii. 9, 10; and the secure soul is made a prey to his spiritual adversaries. Soul lethargies are most dangerous, most deadly. Those that slept in the sweating sickness generally died. He who watcheth not is led about, like one in his natural sleep, by any temptation, he knoweth not how nor whither. When the wolves in the fable once prevailed with the sheep to part with the dogs, they soon devoured them. If Satan can but get men to forego this means of their safety, he will soon make them his prey. The old world was drowned in sleep before they were drowned in water. Sodom and Gomorrah were secure when they were destroyed by fire.

It is reported of the dragon, that whilst he sleepeth, a jewel is taken out of his head. Noah lost the jewel of temperance, David the jewel of chastity, whilst they were fallen asleep. If this eye of watchfulness be once shut, the soul is open to all wickedness. When Argus, notwithstanding his hundred eyes, was by Mercury piped into a sleep, he was transformed into a cow.[1]

Reader, hearken to God's watchword: 'Ye are all children of light, and children of the day; we are not of the night nor of darkness; therefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober,' 1 Thes. v. 6, 7. Sleep is not seasonable in the day of

[1] A pheasant or peacock.—ED.

grace, nor suitable to a child of light: 'They that sleep, sleep in the night,' 1 Thes. v. 7. The night is for sleep, therefore in it God draweth a curtain of darkness about us; as the nurse, when she would lay her babe to sleep, throweth a cloth over the head of the cradle. But the day is for watching, for working.

He hath little reason to give himself to sleep, who is every moment surrounded with mortal enemies, which are neither few nor weak. Naturalists tell us that the bird onocratulus and the pelican take their rest with their beaks upright, expecting the hawk; and that the whale and dolphin sleep with their heads erected above water, for fear of hurt. Though there were but that one text of Scripture, 1 Pet. v. 8, relating to this duty, it were enough to alarm any wise man, and to call him to his arms: 'Be sober, be vigilant; for your adversary the devil walketh about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.' If that voice among the ancient Romans, *Hannibal ad portas*, Hannibal is at the gates, were sufficient to make them leave whatsoever they were about, and run to their weapons, and stand upon their guard, what watchfulness should this voice of the Holy Ghost, 'The devil is at the door,' call thee to! Reader, take that verse a little in pieces, and see what a foe thou hast to fight with, and then tell me whether it doth not concern thee to watch. Consider,

1. His power: 'Your adversary the devil.' It is not a weak man, but a mighty devil. Thou art not called to wrestle with flesh and blood, but principalities and powers. Is man a match for a devil? or a stripling nodding fit to enter the lists with Goliath? What is a pigmy to a giant, or a dying creature to the prince of the powers of the air? Had David been asleep when the lion out of the wood came against him, the lion had sooner tore him by the throat than he had taken the lion by the beard. The cobweb may as soon withstand the broom in the maid's hand, and the dust oppose the force of a violent wind, as a nodding, secure Christian the temptations of Satan.

2. His policy: 'Seeking whom he may devour.' Had our enemy strength without craft, there were not so much danger, nor cause of vigilancy; but when he hath seven heads, as well as ten horns, and exceeds us in subtlety as much as in power, it concerneth us to be watchful. He that playeth with a cunning fencer will heed his wards the more. Reader, the devil hath a shrewd guess what Delilah is most likely to entice thee, and deprive thee of thy spiritual strength; and if amongst all the uncircumcised there be any that will fit thee, thou shalt not want her. He hath not walked to and

fro in the earth so long for nothing; but he knoweth what weeds will take best and thrive most in the soil of thy heart; and be confident he will help thee both to the seeds and plants of them. The subtle serpent, that could wind himself into paradise, knoweth surely how to wind himself into thee. If he were too crafty for man when he was perfect, much more is he for man polluted. And can such a strong politic foe be resisted when thou art lazing upon thy bed of security?

3. His industry: 'Your adversary the devil goeth about.' He is a diligent servant, never from your elbow. As Joseph's mistress, when denied, still solicited, and Samson's harlot pressed him with continual importunity night and day, that his very soul was vexed unto death; so the devil serveth men; he will never forsake them, but follow them with his darts and assaults, till they are safe in heaven from him, or safe in hell with him. He is called the prince of the powers of the air, and his angels spiritual wickednesses in high places; the air is the seat of his empire, and truly, as ravenous fowl hover up and down in the air, to catch and kill little chickens; and though they be frighted away by any one, yet they lie near at the catch, and the person is no sooner gone, but they are descending to destroy them; so those infernal spirits are hovering up and down, walking to and fro, to defile and destroy souls; and though they are resisted and foiled, yet they impudently continue their former endeavours to undo us. Now, hath he any time for sleep that is every moment in such danger?

4. His cruelty: 'As a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.' The lions of the forest have no pity: 'Lest he tear my soul like a lion, rending it in pieces,' Ps. vii. 2. The lions brake the bones of Daniel's accusers before they came to the bottom of the den. But the lions of hell have much less pity; his tender mercies are cruelties indeed. It is not the loss of thy life, but of thy soul, and thy God, and thy Christ, and that for ever, which he looks after. The racking of thy body, and rending thy bones, is nothing to the flames, and whips, and torments which he makes men suffer, and that not for a day, or week, or year, or age, but to all eternity.

Reader, is there not infinite reason for watchfulness? Had not the apostle ground enough for his precept, 'Be sober, be vigilant,' when our adversary is so strong a devil, so sedulous, going about, so cruel, as a roaring lion, and so crafty, seeking by all means whom he may devour? Yet, alas! this is not all. Go where we will, we see abundant cause to look well to our feet. Every place we come into is a net to ensnare us; we cannot look out of our eyes, but we

see a baited hook, nor open our ears, but we hear the syren's songs; we cannot put forth our hands, but we touch pitch, nor set our feet, but in the midst of nets; every part of the body is a Judas, a traitor to the soul. Our crosses and afflictions, if we be secure, will be to us as the jail to a prisoner, filling us with vermin. Our greatest earthly comforts, if we be not watchful, prove but like traps set for vermin, pleasant and killing. When the world sings most sweetly in our ears, she doth but, like Orpheus with his pipe, endeavour to lead us by the ears into unquenchable flames. Thieves with provender in their hands catch horses to steal them; the world allures our hearts by its pleasures and profits, and steals them from God. Our own hearts are Jacobs, supplanters of us, deceitful and desperately wicked. As the water-fowl in Friesland will decoy other wild-fowl in a net, and then give a watchword to their master to seize on them, so officious will our own hearts be to the devil. And shall we not watch and pray that we enter not into temptation?

Sleep is the great leveller which makes all equal. The strongest Samson is as liable in his sleep to be slain as the smallest infant. When a deep sleep from the Lord had seized on Saul and his soldiers, how easily might David, if he had pleased, have killed them! He took away Saul's spear and cruse of water, to assure him that he could have taken away his life. Ah, how soon may the devil, or world, or flesh, defile, deceive, and destroy a sleeping soul! Bees, that have many enemies, mice, spiders, drones, hornets, birds, and beasts, never dare, say naturalists, to give themselves to security, but night and day have their scouts, and sentinels, and *corps-de-garde*, to keep watch and ward, lest some of their many enemies should on a sudden surprise them. The Christian may learn this duty from such creatures. Spiders weave their cobwebs near the flowers where the bees use to gather, and also just over the passage out of their hives, that so at their going out, but especially at their coming in, laden and weary, they may catch them, and make a prey of them. David saith, 'In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me.' So mayest thou, reader, say, In the way wherein I daily walk doth Satan privily lay baits to catch me; at my table, in my closet, in my shop, in my bed, in the streets, in all places where I go, he hath laid snares for my soul. If there be a snare, and such danger in all things, then let me advise thee, if thou wouldst avoid them, in the words of Paul to Timothy, 'Watch thou in all things,' 2 Tim. iv. 5.

Watch against sin, against all sin. The gardener doth not only

watch over his flowers, to water and cherish them, but also watcheth all weeds, to pluck and root them up. Take heed lest there be any root of bitterness. Epiphanius tells us, when a dead corpse was carried by any of the Israelites' houses, they used to shut their doors and windows, intimating that men must be watchful against the scent and infection of sin. It is in vain for a captain to guard one gate of a castle, to prevent the enemy's entering there, if he leave another open, when the whole fort is beleaguered and surrounded with mortal enemies.

Watch especially against thine own sin. If a man have many wounds, whereof one is more dangerous than the rest, being near a vital part, though he will be mindful and careful of all, yet he will have a special care of that which is most dangerous. A Christian must watch against all sin, all soul diseases, but principally against his own sin—that disease which is most dangerous; as a wise governor will have a special eye upon that particular person in his garrison whom he knoweth to be a traitor.

Watch for the doing of good; for seasons of prayer, and hearing, and Christian communion. The countryman watcheth for the bell ringing on the market-day, when the sacks will be opened, that he may buy food for himself and his family. The mariner watcheth for the tide; the diseased folk watched for the moving of the waters by the angels. David watched as a sparrow on the house-top, where he might peck up some corn, get some spiritual nourishment. An opportunity of worshipping God is a jewel; the Christian may well watch to take it up.

Watch in duties. The child must be watched at school, or he will play and toy, instead of getting his lesson. The heart must be watched in an ordinance, or it will wander wholly from the business in hand: 'Continue in prayer, and watch in the same,' Col. iv. 2. Take heed how ye hear. The Bible will drop out of the sleeper's hand, and prayer is a wrestling with God, which is not a work to be done nodding. They who talk in their sleep talk idly.

Watch after duties. Running carelessly into the open air, immediately after the taking of physic, is dangerous. When the garden is dressed, and the seed sown in it, we must watch it lest hogs get into it, and root up all. Satan thinks to take the Christian at an advantage, after the duty is over; and though he could not beat him in the fight, yet to do it when the saint hath laid by his weapons. It was a wise speech of Marcus Aurelius, after he had vanquished Popilion, general of the potent Parthians, and won the day: I tell thee of a truth, that I stand in greater fear of fortune at this

present than I did before the battle, for she careth not so much to overtake the conquered, as to overcome the conqueror. Truly Satan will be industrious to destroy both the conquered utterly, and to overcome the conqueror.

Watch thy senses. These are the *Cinque Ports*, as one calls them, of the *Isle of man*, which, if not well garrisoned, will let in strangers and disturbers of our peace. At these havens much of Satan's lading is taken in. Job made a covenant with his eyes; he would not suffer them to gad and gaze at random, lest they should return defiled. Democritus walking abroad, would shut his eyes, lest by their wandering his mind should be taken off from the contemplation of honest things. Actæon became, as the poet fancieth, meat for his dogs, by suffering his eyes to wander. Lusting hath often been the issue of looking; witness Joseph's mistress, David, Achan, the Israelites, Num. xv. 39. Stratonice took Mithridates with a song. The heart hath often been angled into sin by the ear, and led into temptation by the eye; therefore Cassian relates that, to preserve the cleanness of the heart, the Egyptian masters taught that men must be *surdi*, *cæci*, *muti*, deaf, blind, and dumb. If those outworks be well guarded, the royal fort is in the less hazard. Shut up the five windows—*i.e.*, guard the five senses, that the whole house may be full of light, according to the Arabian proverb.

Watch your affections. If those waves be tempestuous, they will cast up much foam and froth, mire and dirt. He had need to make a strong wall, that would keep these raging waters within their bounds.

Watch your tongues. The sea hath not more need of banks to keep it in, than the tongue of a bridle. The tongue is compared to a sword, to a razor, both which are keen weapons, and must be handled warily: Ps. xxxix. 1, 'I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my tongue; I will keep my mouth with a bridle, whilst the wicked are before me.'

Watch your hearts. The heart is the forge, the spring of life, and a wound there is mortal. Keep thy heart with all diligence, (*super omnem custodiam*, above all keeping, Jun. ;) out of it are the issues of life. Watch over all things, watch in all things. This voice, saith Bucer,[1] should always sound in our ears, Watch, watch.

How frequent is Christ in his precepts to this duty, as knowing fully the weight and concernment of it: 'Watch ye therefore, for

[1] Merito debet semper sonare in auribus, Vigilate.—*Bucer in Mark* xiii.

ye know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of man cometh. Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.' And he is as frequent in his promises to it: 'Blessed is that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find watching;' 'blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments;' 'and if he shall come in the second or third watch, and find him so, blessed is he,' Luke xii. 37, 38, 43. Surely blessedness is worthy our waking; bliss is worth keeping our eyes open a few days for. Apollonius, held in his time for an oracle, coming early in the morning to Vespasian's gate, and finding him, then a private person, up, and at study, he said to his companion, This man is worthy to reign and command an empire; which afterwards came to pass.[1] He that watcheth, with Christ, the short hour of this life, shall be counted worthy to reign with him in his kingdom for ever. Sion, which is frequently put for the church of God, signifieth a watch-tower, because from that hill a man might see the Holy Land, and all the countries thereabout; but the spiritual signification of it may be this, that all the members of God's church must be like soldiers in a watch-tower, observing who cometh in and who goeth out, lest traitors should steal into the fort of the heart undiscovered.

Fifthly, If thou wouldst exercise thyself to godliness, think often of thy dying day, and of what price and value godliness will be to thee at such a time. There are few thoughts more terrible or more profitable than of death. Hence it is that God commands man so often to remember his latter end, because the meditation of it is so gainful to him. The first day man was made, he was called to think of his last day. God minded him of death in the tree of knowledge, and the threatening annexed to the prohibition, that he might thereby keep him from sin. Satan could not prevail with Eve to taste of that killing fruit, till he had prevailed with her to distrust that threatening of death, 'Ye shall not surely die,' Gen. iii. 4. After the fall, God reneweth this meditation, by turning the conditional into an absolute commination, 'Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return.' And though the Holy Ghost omitteth many particulars about God's carriage with the long-lived patriarchs, and their holy conversation before him, yet he is exact in registering their deaths—and he died, and he died, of every one, Gen. v.—to quicken us to fear God, because we are but dying, frail men. There is hardly anything about which we deal, but God gives us by it a memento of death. Our clothes are all fetched out of death's

[1] Philostr. in Vit.

wardrobe, our food out of death's shambles. The sun is an emblem of life's posting, the night of the chambers of darkness. The year hath its autumn, the day its night. Our candles should mind us of the wasting of our days, the evening of the shadow of death; our undressing, of our putting off our earthly tabernacles; and our lying down in our beds, of our lying down in our graves.

If thou wouldst make religion thy business and main work, think often and seriously of thy death and departure of this world. He that guides and steers the ship aright, sits in the stern or hindermost part of it. He that would order his works, his way, according to God, must be frequent in the meditation of his end. The end of his days must be at the end of all his thoughts. Zeno Cittiæus consulted with the oracle how he might live well, and received this answer, *Εἰ συγχρωτίζοιτο τοῖς νεκροῖς*, If he would be of the same colour with the dead.

Reader, if thou wouldst live much, and well, get thy heart as much affected with godliness in health as it will be in sickness. Have the same thoughts of it, the same seriousness about it, the very same carriage towards it, whilst the world salutes thee with its smiling face, and bewitching features, which thou wilt wish thou hadst had when thou shalt come to take thy leave of it, and lie upon thy dying bed. Be of the same colour with the dead. Oh what thoughts have the dead of godliness, and of making it one's business! The dead in Christ, and the dead out of Christ, have both other manner of thoughts of religion, and making it one's occupation, than thou canst possibly imagine.

Those who, while they live, delay repentance, and dally about religion, minding it as if they minded it not, who neither, in their dealings with men, nor duties towards God, nor in their relations nor vocations, make it their business, but misspend their precious time, misemploy their weighty talents, neglect God and their eternal welfares, as if they had not been made to mind either, when they come to die, and perceive in good earnest that that surly sergeant death will not be denied, but away they must go into the other world, and fare well or ill for ever, according as their hearts and lives have been godly or ungodly, good or bad here, good Lord, what thoughts have they then of godliness! How hearty are their wishes that they had made it their business! What worlds would they give that religion had been their principal work! What prayers and tears do they pour out for a few days to mind it in! What sighs, and sobs, and groans, that they have neglected it so long! What purposes do they take up, what promises do

they make, if God spare them, to follow hard after holiness, and make it their only business! A philosopher asking Euchrites which of the two he had rather be, Crœsus, one of the richest and most vicious in the world, or Socrates, one of the poorest and most virtuous, Euchrites answered, *Crœsus vivens, et Socrates moriens*, Crœsus while he lived, and Socrates when he died. The cuckoo, when wearing away, changeth her note. The worst men, when they come to die, alter and change exceedingly.

It is worthy our observation, that those who are greatest strangers to death are most familiar with the works of darkness. No place abounds more in wolves, no person in wickedness, than where this mastiff is wanting: 'Jerusalem hath grievously sinned. Her filthiness is in her skirts; she remembereth not her last end; therefore she came down wonderfully,' Lam. i. 8, 9. Jerusalem hath grievously sinned; hath sinned sin—Heb., Hath committed a great or grievous sin, so the Chaldee. Behold here the colour of her sin; it was not of an ordinary dye, but of a black, a bloody, a heinous nature. 'Her filthiness is in her skirts.' Lo, here her carriage after her sinning: she made of it an open show, so far was she from shame. It is a term taken from prostituted strumpets or menstruous women, saith Diodat. The outward looks of the former bewray her inward lusts, and the marks of the latter's defilement are visible on her garment. Thus the show of Jerusalem's countenance did publicly evidence her crime. She did as clearly by her skirts proclaim her filth, as if it had been written on her face and engraven on her forehead. Here was impiety in her practice, 'Jerusalem hath grievously sinned;' and impudency to purpose, 'her filthiness is in her skirts.' But what dust was that which bred such vermin? what polluted seed was that which begat such a poisonous serpent? Reader, if thou wouldst know the mother which brought forth and bred up this ugly monster, 'she remembereth not her last end, therefore she came down mightily.'[1] It was her forgetfulness of death which nourished and cherished her wicked deeds. They who mind not their reckoning, care not how much they riot and revel.

They who put far away the evil day, cause the seat of violence to come near, Amos vi. 3. The further we drive death from our thoughts, the nearer we draw to sin. They who fancy their foe to be very far off, will not prepare and make ready to fight. Men that are young do not consider that the old ass often carrieth the skin of the young to the market; that death comes like a thunder-

[1] Immunditiæ suæ in fimbriis suis mercedem nondum recordata.—*Trem.*

bolt and lightning, and blasteth the green corn, and consumeth the strongest buildings; if they did, they would flee youthful lusts.

He who seeth death at his door, will be most diligent about his duty: a serious consideration of the death of the body will be a sovereign though a sharp medicine to kill the body of death. The naturalists tell us, that the ashes of a viper, applied to the part which is stung, draweth the venom out of it. They who look on themselves as pilgrims and strangers, will abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul, 1 Pet. ii. 11. Who would make his belly, his gut, his god, who considereth that every meal may be his last? or that thinketh his dainty diet, his fine fare, doth but provide a greater feast for worms? Who would give way to sinful wantons, who believeth that whilst he is unloading his lust, God may put a period to his life? He that is high in conceit of himself, little dreameth how low he must shortly be laid. Who would be proud of that body which shall ere long see corruption, become such a noisome, loathsome carcase, that the nearest and dearest relations will not endure the sight or scent of it? He who loveth the world inordinately, forgetteth that he may leave it suddenly, and must leave it certainly. Would Haman have bragged so much of Esther's banquet, if he had known that his own corpse should be served in for the last course? Would the Israelites have tempted God for meat, if they had thought that death should have been their sauce? Would Achan have coveted the golden wedge, if he had mused of his so sudden departure into the other world? Without question, he would have forborne the Babylonish garment, if he had seen death at his back, so ready to strip him naked. Had the rich fool thought that his bed should that night have proved his grave, he would never in the day have prided himself in his goods. Who would not at God's call vilify that flesh which will be ere long a lump of filth, and be choice of that soul which lives for a more high and heavenly flight!

It is reported of the Brahmans, that they use no clothes but bear-skins, no houses but caves, no food but such as nature dresseth. When Alexander came to them in his travels, he asked them the reason of this severe kind of living. They answered him, We know we shall die, whether to-day or to-morrow we know not; and therefore why should we take care, either for power to govern others, or for riches to live in pleasures, or for honour to be esteemed of? None are so loose to the world, that great hinderance of holiness, as they who ponder they must leave it. Travel-

lers who look on themselves near their journey's end, care not to burden themselves with much baggage. Their moderation will be known to all men, who believe the Lord is at hand.

Those who are most mindful of their deaths, are most faithful in their lives. Job was eminent in grace, because Job was daily conversing with his grave. All the days of his appointed time he waited till his change came, Job xiv. 14. That servant will follow his work most and best, who expecteth his master's coming every moment.

It is said of the kite, that by the turning of his tail he directs and winds about his whole body; the same is reported of the glede or puttock. Fish also, say naturalists, turn and wind about by the fins in their tails. Reader, could I but prevail with thee to mind the end of thy life, it would help thee very much to order thy conversation aright.[1] Oh, said God, that my people were wise! then would they consider their latter end, Deut. xxxii. 29.

The Thebans made a law, that no man should build a house for himself to dwell in before he had made his grave. Several of the philosophers had their graves made before their doors, that whenever they went abroad they might remember their deaths. If thou wouldst but in thy outgoings and incomings behold the place of thy burial, I doubt not but thou wilt be watchful over all thy ways. When thou art in the midst of thy delights, as Joseph of Arimathea, have thy tomb in thy garden, and it may prevent thy surfeiting by those dainties. When thou sittest at table, let the first dish set before thee be, according to Prester John's custom, a death's head, and then with what fear wilt thou feed; how thankfully wilt thou receive the creatures, even as through the beloved Son! how soberly wilt thou use them, even as in God's sight! If God raise thee to the height of prosperity, and some friend do but (as Moses and Elias to Christ, when his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was as white as snow, Luke ix. 30, 31) talk to thee of thy decease, which thou must shortly accomplish, it will abate thy love to the world's withering vanities, and quicken thine endeavours after the eternal weight of glory. If God cast thee into great adversity, and thou dost but consider thy time here is but short, and therefore thy troubles cannot be long, this will make thee contented in the saddest condition. When thou beholdest thy relations, and forethinkest that thine eternal separation from them is at hand, and that within a few days thou shalt never have another opportunity to help them

[1] Consideratio mortis tanquam cauda ad vitam optime regendam confert.

heavenward, how will it stir thee up to do them all the good thou canst now, both by thy precepts, pattern, and prayers! If, when thou attendest on public ordinances, thou wilt but cast thine eye on the graves in the churchyard, as thou passest along, and meditate thus: Within a little time I must be laid in the dust, when I shall hear no more, pray no more, enjoy a Sabbath no more; when I shall never, never more have a tender of a Saviour, never more have a season to beg mercy in for my poor soul. After such awakening thoughts, with what attention wouldst thou hear! with what affections wouldst thou pray! with what intension and devotion, with what seriousness and uprightness, wouldst thou perform every duty!

Some say that nothing in this world is so strong as death, because it subdueth the mighty, it conquereth the greatest conquerors, it overcometh all. Sure I am, that death hath great force and power over men's souls, as well as over their bodies. The thought of it hath raised some to a spiritual life. The consideration of death hath also caused others to live much in a little space; when they have seen the sun of their lives near setting, and the night of their deaths approaching, they have in the day followed their work with the greater diligence. None will work so hard as they who think themselves near their everlasting homes.

There were two emperors, Adrian and Charles the Fifth, that in their lifetime caused their coffins to be carried before them, and their exequies to be solemnly celebrated, to this end possibly, that, considering they were but men, dying men, they might thence be righteous in their government, and virtuous in their actions.

It is reported of Turannius,[1] that after he was ninety years old, he got leave of Cæsar to retire himself from court; and the old man would needs be laid in his bed, as one that had breathed out his last, and all his family must bewail his death. Friend, do thou in earnest what he did in jest. Suppose thou wert this day to bid adieu to thy friends, relations, honours, and possessions, and to travel into the unknown other world; to take thy leave of hours, and days, and months, and years, and time, and to sail into the boundless ocean of eternity; suppose thou sawest death creep in at thy chamber window, come up to thy bedside, draw the curtain, take thee by the hand, and tell thee that he is come from the infinite, almighty, jealous, most holy God, to fetch thee immediately into his presence, there to answer for all thy thoughts,

[1] Sen. de. Brev. Vit., cap. ult.

words, and deeds, and to receive either matchless and endless pain, or unchangeable and unconceiveable pleasures, according as thy practices have been, what wouldst thou think at such a time of godliness? Good Lord, what a price wouldst thou set upon it! what wouldst thou not do or give for it! Then godliness will be godliness indeed, as little and as lightly as thou settest by it now. And why is it not worth as much now? Dost thou not see death like a mole digging thy grave under thee? Dost thou not feel that worm within thee, which will ere long consume thee?

Believe it, thy death may be nearer than thou dreamest; the glass of thy life may be almost out, though thou thinkest it is but new turned. The murdering piece which kills thee, parting thy soul and body, may be discharged with white powder, give thee no warning at all. The next arrow which is shot may hit thee; the next time the bell goes may be to tell others that thou art dead; the next time the earth is opened may be to receive thy body in. Thou seest some fall on thy right hand, some on thy left hand, some of thy very age, and of greater strength and health, and canst thou esteem thyself shot-free? Is not every carcase a crier, and every tomb a teacher, calling upon thee to number thy days, and apply thine heart unto wisdom?

Silly man is like the foolish chicken, though the kite comes and takes away many of their fellows, yet the rest continue pecking the ground, never heeding their owner, nor minding their shelter. Death comes and snatcheth away one man here, a second there; one before them, another behind them, and they are killed with death, undone for ever, Rev. ii. 23; yet they who survive take no warning, but persist in their wicked and ungodly ways. 'They are destroyed from morning to evening; they perish for ever without any regarding it. Doth not their excellency which is in them go away? they die, even without wisdom,' Job iv. 20, 21.

It is the saying of a heathen,[1] That it is impossible for a man to live the present day well, who doth not purpose to live it as his last. I may say to thee, friend, it is impossible for thee to live the present day ill, if thou wilt but live it as thy last day. If thou dost but consider, Well, this place may be the last place I shall come into, shall I pollute it with sin? or shall I not rather perfume it with sanctity? This expression may be the last that ever I shall speak, shall it be tainted with vice? or shall it not rather be seasoned with grace? This action may be the last that ever I shall do, and shall it be a deed of darkness? or shall it not

[1] Muson apud Stob., Ser. 1.

rather be a work of the day, of the light? This sermon may be the last that ever I shall hear, and shall I now be heedless? After this I shall never more have a call from Christ, and shall I now be careless? This prayer may be the last prayer that ever I shall pour out to God; if God deny me now, I am damned and undone for ever, and shall not my head, and heart, and will, and mind, and all be working, that it may be a prosperous, a prevalent prayer? This Sabbath may be the last Sabbath that ever I shall sanctify; I may from henceforth and for ever be deprived of all such opportunities of getting and increasing grace, of serving and honouring my Saviour, and of working out my own salvation. If I sow not now good seed, I must never expect a happy harvest. If I buy not now, the market will be quickly over. Shall I lose any precious minute of this holy day? Is it time now to trifle about the affairs of my soul and eternity? Well, I will, through Christ, take heed how I hear; I will hear in hearing, I will pray in praying; I will hear and hearken, cry and call, with all my heart, and strength, and soul, and mind, that if it be possible, the Lord may not leave me without a blessing. When the orator thinketh he is at the close of his oration, then he useth his chiefest art and rhetoric to move his auditors' affections; he would have his last part his best part.

O reader, if thou wilt but often wind up this weight of thine approaching death, it would keep thy soul in a quick, spiritual, and regular motion at all times. As ashes preserve fire, and keep coals from going out, so the thought that we shall ere long be turned into ashes will preserve the fire of grace alive and in action.

Sixthly, If thou wouldst exercise thyself to godliness, mind a daily performance of sacred duties. He that hath nothing of his own whereupon to live, must be frequently fetching in provision from the shops or market where it is to be had. The Christian's life is maintained, not by himself, but by what he receiveth from God; not that we are sufficient of ourselves, our sufficiency is of God; therefore there is a necessity of daily converse with God by holy ordinances, and of waiting at his gate; as the beggar, who hath neither a bit of bread, nor a penny to buy any, at the rich man's door for supply. Our spiritual strength is like Israel's manna, rained down daily; we are kept by a divine power, and allowed but from hand to mouth, that we might continually depend on, and resort to, the Lord Jesus for our allowance. Paul speaks in some places of his great disbursements—how much he laid out for God

and his people, that he laboured more than all the apostles; but you must think, Whence had Paul such a spiritual stock that he was able to outvie all others in his expenses? He tells you that the Son of God kept house for him, and that he was the steward to spend of his treasure, and thence his disbursements were so large. 'I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life that I live in the flesh is by the faith of the Son of God,' Gal. ii. 20. As the plant mistel, having no root of its own, both grows and lives in the stock or body of the oak; so the apostle, having no root of his own, did live and grow in Christ. As if he had said, I live, I keep a noble house, am given to hospitality above many, in labours more abundant, in watchings, in fastings more frequent, in perils, and dangers, and deaths often; but the truth is, I do all this at another's cost and charge, not at mine own; I am beholden to Christ for strength to do and suffer whatsoever I am called to. He carrieth the purse for me, and gives out to me according to my necessities. I have not a farthing of my own wherewith to buy the least morsel. I can do nothing of myself, but I can do all things through Christ strengthening me.

Man is a weak creature, and so far from running, that he is not able to creep in the way of God's commandments, unless Christ strengthen him: 'Without me ye can do nothing,' John xv. 5. If Christ withdraw himself as the sun, he carrieth the light of holiness along with him. The easiest duty is too hard, and the weakest enemy too strong for us, unless Christ assist us. It is upon his wings alone that we can mount to heaven, in an ordinance, and through his power, that we do improve any providence. It is not the standing army of habitual grace that will make the Christian a conqueror, he must daily be recruited with auxiliaries from heaven. The watchman doth not only make the watch, and set every wheel in its right place, but he or some other must wind it up daily, or it will stand still. Exercising grace is as requisite to our spiritual motion, as habitual grace to our spiritual being. The razor, though it be never so sharp or keen at first, if it be used, must be often at the whetstone, or it will grow dull.

The wife that hath frequent occasions for money for provision for herself, and children, and servants, and for clothes and all family necessaries, and not a penny but what comes out of her husband's purse, and he, fearing she should be prodigal, lets her have money by driblets, but from hand to mouth, must be always going or sending to him, or otherwise starve. The shopkeeper that drives a great trade in the country must go often to London, or abroad in

other parts, to fetch in commodities. The Israelites in the wilderness were maintained for water by the rock. They drank of the rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ. The rock followed them; they did not only drink of it at first, but had a constant morning's draught, and drank of it often in the day; it ran in a stream after them, and every day supplied them. It is no marvel the apostle commandeth us, Pray continually, pray without ceasing, pray evermore, when he knew all our living was got by begging, that all our supplies must be from above, and we must expect nothing without asking. Ordinances are the food of the soul. As cows afford us both milk and beef, so ordinances are milk to babes, and meat for strong men. Our God is the fountain of spiritual as well as of natural life. It is said most truly, in respect of a natural life, 'In him (meaning God) we live, and move, and have our being,' Acts xvii. 28. 'We live.' Now as God hath made the heart the spring of natural life, and hath drawn from thence a multitude of arteries to carry the vital spirits through the whole body, and disperse life through every part of it; so he hath made the Mediator the spring of spiritual life, and his ordinances the arteries to convey life to every part of the soul. 'In whom we move.' As God hath from the head derived manifold sinews to carry out thence the animal spirits, and with them the faculty both of sense and motion over all; so the Lord, from Jesus Christ the Church's head, through the sinews of sacred duties, conveyeth spiritual sense and motion to all his members. 'And have our being.' To preserve our being, he hath made the liver a fountain of blood, and from thence drawn the veins to convey it over the body, to the nourishment of the whole. Ordinances are those veins which convey and disperse gracious spirits over the whole new man. 'With him is the well of life,' Ps. xxxvi. 9.

Sacred duties are as needful every day for our souls as food and raiment for our bodies. The body must continually be repaired with nourishment, because it is continually consumed by our natural heat. Yesterday's bread will not keep the labourer to-day in strength and vigour to go through with his work; he must have new diet, or he cannot hold out. Friend, I must bespeak thee, as the angel to Elijah, Up and eat, for the journey is too great for thee. Up and be doing in prayer, and Scripture, and holy ordinances, that thou mayest feed and receive spiritual nourishment; for otherwise the business of exercising thyself to godliness, the duties required of thee to be performed, the graces to be exercised, the temptations to be resisted, the deadly enemies to be

conquered, will be too hard for thee, the journey will be too great for thee. The Amalekite, by long fasting, grew faint and unable to go his journey. If the bringing stream be not as large as the running stream, the bottom will quickly be without water. The greatest stock will lessen apace, if a man spend daily on it, though but in a small quantity, if he hath no way of getting. Those that are under-kept, and called to hard labour, can never perform what is required of them. The spirits daily are decaying, and if not daily renewed by proper nourishment we perish. The vessels that are always leaking, must stand constantly under the conduit to get what they lose. When Jonathan, through fasting, became faint, he tasted a little honey, and his eyes were enlightened. 'How much more,' said he, 'if haply the people had eaten liberally of the spoil of their enemies which they found? for had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines,' 1 Sam. xiv. 29, 30. The more a Christian mindeth divine ordinances, in obedience to God's precept, and affiance on God's promise, the more strength he shall receive to conquer his spiritual adversaries, and to discharge the several duties incumbent on him. The truth is, our religious life, our heavenly flame, is like a straw fire to malt, which must constantly be tended and fed with fuel, or it will go out. There is not more need of the shepherd's constant and daily tending his weak sheep in the summer season, than of the saint's daily regarding his precious soul. As trees being well ordered with skill and diligence, they become abundantly fruitful; but being left to themselves, without culture and care, they bring forth little or no fruit. So Christians, by a diligent use of means, abound in the fruits of righteousness, but neglecting ordinances, they decline and decay.

The heart of man is, like Reuben, unstable as water, and is stablished with grace, Heb. x., which cannot be expected, but through the means of grace. The viol, that with every change of weather is apt to be out of tune, must be constantly hung within scent of the fire. Whilst we are in the care of this world we are full of damps, and therefore need all means of quickening. Our hearts are like clocks, twice a day at least the plummets must be pulled up, or their motion and course will be hindered.

Indeed, as God could preserve our bodies without food or any sustenance by his omnipotent power, as he did Moses and Elijah forty days together, but he will not where he affordeth ordinary means; so he could preserve our souls in life without ordinances, but he will not where his providence giveth us opportunity to enjoy them.

Reader, I must say to thee, as Jacob to the patriarchs, 'Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt; get you down thither and buy for us, that we may live and not die.' Behold, thou hast heard there is spiritual food in heaven; the son of Joseph hath his granaries full of corn, go thou thither daily by sacred duties, that thy soul may live and not die. There is a sensible decay of the strength in husbandmen, whose work is great, upon one day's abstinence. If tradesmen grow careless of their business, and neglect their shops, they quickly decay in their estates. When Christians grow careless of duties, and neglect their closets, it is no wonder that they decline in their spiritual stocks. When the moon hath her open side downward she decreaseth, but when her open side is upwards towards heaven she increaseth in light. There is no growing in grace and holiness, but by conversing with heaven. Grace, like armour, may easily be kept bright if it be daily used, but if it hang by the wall, it will quickly rust, and cost much time and pains to scour.

Much fasting takes away the stomach; and omission of closet duties at one time makes a man more backward to them, and dead about them, another time. When a scholar hath played the truant one day, it is difficult to bring him to school the next day. Fear and shame both keep him back; when he comes thither he is the more untoward about his book. Our deceitful hearts, after they have discontinued holy exercises and are broken loose, are like horses gotten out of their bounds, not found or brought back without much trouble. When an instrument is daily played on, it is kept in order; but if it be but a while neglected and cast into a corner, the strings are apt to break, the frets to crack, the bridge to fly off, and no small trouble and stir is requisite to bring it into order again.

We read of the Jews' daily sacrifice, Luke i. 10, which was morning and evening, Exod. xxix. 38, and xxx. 7, 8. David was for morning, and evening, and noontide, Ps. lv. 17. Daniel was three times a day upon his knees, Dan. vi. 10.

In the morning the saints were at their devotion, which is thought to be the third hour, when the Holy Ghost descended on the apostles, Acts ii. 15. This is deemed to be our ninth hour.

The middle or mid-day prayer was termed the sixth hour, which is our twelfth, John iv. 6. At this time Peter went up to the house-top to pray, Acts x. 9.

The evening prayer was at the ninth hour, which is our three o'clock in the afternoon. 'Now Peter and John went up together

into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour,' Acts iii. 1. So Cornelius, Acts. x. 30, 'At the ninth hour I prayed in my house.' Some think the primitive Christians had these three hours in such regard and use that thence they were termed canonical hours. David tells us, 'Seven times a day do I praise thee, because of thy righteous judgments,' Ps. cxix. 164; 1 Thes. v. 17. The more frequent a Christian is at holy duties, (supposing he doth not make the commands of God to interfere, and neglect his calling and family, when his presence is required in them,) the more thriving he shall be in his spiritual trade. The oftener we go to the fountain or river, the more water we bring thence. As runners in a race do daily diet their bodies, and use exercise to keep themselves in breath, that they may be more able and active when they run for the wager; whereas, if they should neglect it, they would grow pursy and short-winded, and unlikely to hold out when they run for the garland; so Christians, who would hold out to the end, and so run as to obtain, must be daily feeding and dieting their souls, and renewing their strength by these means which God hath appointed.

As the sun is the cause of life and growth in vegetables, so is the Son of God the efficient cause of motion and growth in Christians; where the Son is present in any soul, there is spiritual motion and growth, budding, and blosoming, and bearing fruit; but when the sun withholds and withdraws, when this sun departs, the soul is at a stand. Now, ordinances are the means whereby the Mediator conveys heat, and life, and growth to men.

CHAPTER XI.

Means whereby Christians may exercise themselves to godliness. Frequent meditation of the day of judgment. A daily examination of our hearts, avoiding the occasions and suppressing the beginnings of sin.

Seventhly, If thou wouldst exercise thyself to godliness, meditate much upon the day of judgment. They will prepare themselves best to the battle who always hear the sound of the last trump in their ears. Zisca, that valiant captain of the Bohemians, commanded his countrymen to flay off his skin, when he was dead, and to make a drum of it. Which use, saith he, when ye go to battle, and the sound of it will drive away the Hungarians or any

of your enemies. Could the Christian but, with Jerome, hear the sound of the last trumpet in his ears at all times, it would encourage him in his spiritual warfare, and enable him to fight manfully, and to cause the enemies of his salvation to flee before him. He who can frequently, by faith, view the Judge sitting on his throne of glory, hear the last trumpet sounding; behold the dead raised, the books opened, the godly examined by the covenant of grace, all their duties, graces, services, sufferings publicly declared, approved, and rewarded; the wicked tried by the law of works; all their natural defilements, actual transgressions in thought, word, and deed which ever they were guilty of, with their crimson bloody circumstances, openly revealed, their persons righteously sentenced to the vengeance of the eternal fire, and that sentence speedily, without the least favour or delay, executed on them, will surely loathe sin as that which brings him certain shame and torment, and follow after holiness, which will be his undoubted credit and comfort at that day. The apostle, writing to the Jews concerning the terror of that day, how the heavens must pass away with a great noise, and the elements melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works therein burnt up, makes this use of it, 'Seeing, then, that all those things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?' 2 Pet. iii. 11, 14. And again, 'Wherefore, beloved, seeing ye look for these things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.' He had need to be exact in his conversation, who must undergo so strict an examination. Well may the time of judgment be called a day, for it will declare and manifest the worth of grace and holiness, which in the night of this life is not observed.

Ah, who can conceive the value which the vilest wretch on earth will put upon holiness at that day! Then grace will be grace indeed, and godliness will be godliness indeed. Then they who mock at saints for their purity and strictness, and look upon sanctity but as hypocrisy, and the acting of a part to cozen the world with, and think it is enough to put God off with a few prayers now and then, when their pastimes and lusts will give them leave, will call to believers, as the foolish to the wise virgins, 'Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out;' then the graceless princes and potentates of the world will throw their crowns and diadems at the feet of the meanest Christian for a drachm of his grace and holiness.

The apostle, speaking of that day, puts the question, 'Where shall the sinner and ungodly appear?' 1 Pet. iv. 18. Now, indeed, those that scoff, and deride, and scorn at holiness and holy ones, may

appear before great men in many parts of the world with praise and applause. Now they may appear in the country, and be respected of their drunken, atheistical, brutish neighbours, and probably be the more honoured for their opposition to the spirit of grace and holiness; but then, where will the sinner and ungodly appear? Not in heaven, for that is no sty for swine, no kennel for dogs, no jail for malefactors, no place for such unholy, God-provoking persons. Into it can in no wise enter that which is defiled or unclean. Such a palace is not fit for beasts; snakes, and serpents, and adders are more fit for the bosom and embraces of men, than such men for the bosom and embraces of God. Heaven cast out wicked angels, and will not take in wicked men; where shall they then appear? Not on earth, for that will be burnt up with fire. Their houses and places must know them no more for ever. The earth groaned under their weight whilst it bare them, but now is eased of such loads, and shall not be pestered with such plagues again. But where shall they appear? Not before Christ the judge with any comfort, for him they have derided, buffeted, crucified; they have rejected his laws, trampled on his blood, told him to his face that they will not have him to reign over them. But where will they appear? Not before the saints, for they have maligned, oppressed, imprisoned, persecuted them as a company of cheats and hypocrites. Oh, where shall the sinner and ungodly appear?

1. Consider the holiness of the Judge. He is the holy Jesus. He loveth righteousness, and hateth iniquity, Ps. xlv. What will the ungodly sinner do when he shall be judged by the holy Saviour? Who can stand before this holy God? 1 Sam. vi. 20. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and so he knoweth the most secret works of darkness. His law is very pure, and observeth and condemneth the least spots, the least defilement; and how will unclean ones endure to be judged for their everlasting lives and deaths by such a law? His throne is a white throne; and how will the black sinner do to stand before this white throne?

Reader, thou hast need to be a faithful and loyal subject, if thou wouldst then be owned and acknowledged by thy sovereign. How exact should he be in his life, who must be tried by so holy a law! 'If thou callest him Father, who without respect of persons will judge every man according to his works, pass the time of thy sojourning here in fear,' 1 Pet. i. 17.

2. Consider the strictness of his proceedings. Every thought, word, and action shall be revealed, examined, and weighed in the balance of the sanctuary: 'There is nothing hid that shall not be

revealed, nor secret that shall not be made known.' The thoughts of thy heart shall then be as visible as the features of thy face: 'When God shall judge the secrets of men's hearts by my gospel,' Rom. ii. 16. All thy words will then be as audible as if thou hadst had a voice to reach every child of Adam, both alive and dead: 'Verily I say unto you, that of every idle word ye shall give an account at the day of Christ,' Mat. xii. 36. Every action of thine will then be legible, not only to God, as it is at this day, but also to angels and men: 'We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, to give an account of all things done in the body, whether they be good, or whether they be evil,' 2 Cor. v. 10. All the works of darkness will then be brought to light. We must all appear, φανερωθῆναι, not only be present in person, and not by a proxy, but be laid open and manifest, be transparent, so the word signifieth, to give an account of everything done, &c., to render a reason of every individual thought, word, and deed—what was the principle from which we acted, what was the rule by which we acted, what was the end for which we acted. When Benjamin's sack was opened, the silver cup appeared. On that fair day all men's packs will be opened, and then it will be known what ware they carry about with them.

Hence some have conjectured that it will not be a short time, nor the judgment soon passed over. It is called a day, but not in relation to our natural or artificial days, for Christ, judging as man in his human nature, by his divine power, will probably employ a far greater time in searching into, and publicly revealing, every man's condition and conversation. Though I am not of their opinions who say it will be precisely a thousand years, because it is said, 'A thousand years are in thy sight but as one day,' yet I judge it to be taken indefinitely; and, as Augustine saith,[1] that the day of judgment shall begin is certain, but when it shall end is uncertain. I find two divines, eminent both for grace and learning in their generations, speaking: one saith, I humbly conceive that the day of judgment shall not be passed over in an instant, but shall be of long continuance; for if Christ should judge only as God, he could despatch it in a moment; but he, judging as man, it must be after the manner of men, that the creature may understand, admire, and approve what is done. The other saith, It must take up some large quantity of time to manifest all the secret sins of men, and therefore it may be made evident, both from Scripture

[1] Per quot dies hoc judicium extendatur incertum est. Scripturarum more diem poni solere pro tempore nemo nescit.—*Aug. de Civit. Dei*, lib. xx. cap. 1.

and reason, that the day of Christ's kingly office, in judging the world, shall last haply longer than the day of Christ's private administration now in governing the world.

3. Consider the weight of the sentence. It is called the eternal judgment, because the sentence then pronounced shall never be reversed, but stand for ever. In this world God judgeth men sometimes mediately, sometimes immediately, which is the first judgment, from which men may appeal by repentance to his mercy-seat; but this the last judgment, once for all, once for ever, in which men receive their final, their eternal doom, John xi. 24. Here Jacob appeals from Laban to a higher tribunal, Gen. xxxi. 53; and David from Saul to the King of kings, 'The Lord judge between me and thee,' 1 Sam. xxiv. 12; Ps. xvii. 2; and Paul appeals from Festus to Cæsar, 'I stand at Cæsar's judgment seat,' Acts xxv. 10. But then there can be no appeal to a higher court, no writ of error can be brought, no arrest of judgment, no second hearing obtained. The sinner condemned to eternal death then is gone for ever: no pardon, no, not so much as a reprieve can be procured for one hour. The saint, absolved and declared an heir of eternal life, is blessed for ever; he shall be beyond all fear, all doubts in himself; above all shot, all opposition from others. In this life Nineveh was threatened, Nineveh repented, and Nineveh was spared. The sentence pronounced was not executed, at least it was respited; but then every sinner will repent, weep, and wail, but repentance will be hid from the eyes of the Judge; all their tears will be in vain. When they are cast, then they are gone for ever.

To provoke thee to holiness,

4. Consider the felicity of the godly at that day. Oh, with what joy will they lift up their heads when that day of their redemption is come! This life is the day of their oppression and persecution, but that day will be the day of their redemption. At this day they are troubled and vexed with a tempting devil, and deceitful hearts, and false, proud, unbelieving flesh, but that will be the day of their redemption from them all. No wonder they love the appearing of Christ, and look and long for his appearing, when it will be the day of their redemption, and time of their refreshing from the presence of the Lord. When thousands and millions shall howl and lament; when the orator will be silenced, and have his mouth stopped; when the soldier, that durst venture into the mouth of the cannon, and dare death itself, shall play the coward, and seek for any hole to hide himself in; when the captains, and kings, and

nobles, shall call to the rocks to fall on them, and the mountains to cover them from the presence of the Lord, and the wrath of the Lamb, even then the godly shall sing and rejoice.

(1.) Their godliness will then be mentioned to their eternal honour. As God hath a bag for men's sins, ('Thou sealest up mine iniquities in a bag,') so he hath a book for their services: 'A book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and thought upon his name.' Then all their prayers, and tears, their watchings, fastings, faith, love, zeal, patience, alms, imprisonment, loss of goods, name, liberty, life for Christ and the gospel, will be manifested to their honour, and praise, and glory at the coming of Christ, 1 Pet. i. 7; Mat. xxv. 34.

(2.) Their names will be then vindicated. With the resurrection of bodies there shall also be a resurrection of names. Now, indeed, the throats of wicked men are open sepulchres, wherein the credit of the godly is buried. Joseph is an adulterer, Nehemiah a traitor, Jeremiah a rebel against the king, Paul a mover of sedition, a pestilent fellow, and one that turned Christian for spite, because the high priest would not give him his daughter in marriage; but when the sea, and death, and hell shall give up their dead, then shall the throats, the open sepulchres of wicked men, give up the names of the godly: 'Then their righteousness shall be cleared as the sun, and their uprightness as the noon-day.'

(3.) Their persons shall be then publicly acquitted. They shall be cleared by public proclamation before God, angels, and men. Hence it is said, 'Their sins shall be blotted out, when the time of refreshment shall come from the presence of the Lord.' The sentence of absolution passed in their conscience by the Spirit at this day is sweet, and puts more joy into their hearts than if all the crowns and sceptres of this world had befallen them; but oh how comfortable will it be to be declared just by the Judge himself before the whole world at that solemn and imperial day! They may then ring that challenge, 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?' Rom. viii. 33; and none will accept it, or take up the gauntlet. Who? Shall God, whose children and chosen they are? No; it is God that justifieth. Shall the Judge? No; it is his undertaken work to present them to the Father without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. He hath washed them in his own blood, and made them as white as innocent Adam or angels. He was judged for them, and will not pass judgment against them. He cannot condemn them, but he must condemn himself, for they are his members, his body, his brethren, bone of

his bone, and flesh of his flesh. Shall the law? No; they have fully answered all its demands, superabundantly satisfied it through their surety, both in perfect obedience to all its precepts, and undergoing its punishment. What the law saith, either in regard of commanding complete subjection, or cursing for the omission of it, it saith to them that are under the law; but they are not under the law, but under grace. Shall conscience? No; next to God and Christ, it is their best friend. As Christ pleads for them to his Father, so conscience pleads for them to themselves: 'This is their rejoicing, the testimony of good consciences, that in simplicity and godly sincerity they had their conversations in this world,' 2 Cor. i. 12. Shall Satan? No; the accuser of the brethren will be then cast down, and his place will be found no more in heaven; then, then those blessed promises will be performed, 'The seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head,' and 'the God of peace shall tread Satan under your feet.'

(4.) The saint's happiness will be then perfected, and he shall never know more what sin or sorrow meaneth, or what want of God's favour, or doubt of Christ's love, or defect of joy and comfort meaneth. The Christian hath so much laid out upon him in this world, vocation, adoption, pardon, peace, joy in the Holy Ghost, hopes of glory, that, in the worst condition that men and devils can plunge him into, he finds cause to say, 'Yet God is good to Israel, to them that are of a clean heart;' but then, when he shall enjoy all that is laid up for him, and know the full extent of God's promises to him, the all of Christ's purchase for him, and the utmost reward of his piety, then surely he will cry out with the psalmist, 'O how great is that goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!' Clemens Alexandrinus makes mention of a place in Persia where there were three hills; when people came to the first, they heard a clashing of armour; when they came to the second, they heard a confused noise; when to the third, nothing but songs of triumph. At the day of the saint's conversion, he comes to the first hill, then he heareth a clashing of armour, listing himself under the captain of his salvation, and proclaiming open war against the world, flesh, and wicked one. At the day of death he comes to the second hill, a confused noise; his friends are weeping and grieving, his wife and children are mourning and bemoaning their loss; though his soul be rejoicing to think of the rest to which it is going, yet the flesh sweateth, panteth, is pierced and pained. At the day of judgment he comes to the third hill, where

he heareth nothing but songs of triumph—Victoria, Victoria, hallelujahs, salvation, honour, glory, praise to the Lord, and to the Lamb for ever! At that day of judgment the whole world shall see and say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous; then shall the wicked return and discern a difference between them that fear God, and them that fear him not. Then grace will appear in all its embroidery and glory on that day of its coronation, when the worst in hell shall admire and adore it. Now holiness hath a wonderful disadvantage, partly by the persecutions, afflictions, bonds, and imprisonments that attend it, and chiefly from the darkness of men's understanding, and the weakness of their eyes, they are not able to view the thousandth part of its comeliness; but then holiness shall be freed from that black guard of hell that dogs her to destroy her, and then the eyes of all the world shall be strengthened so much as to behold her amiableness; then she shall be owned, honoured, acknowledged by God, angels, and all the children of Adam; then she shall be attended, not with mulcts, and penalties, and bonds, and fetters, but crowns, and sceptres, and palms, and kingdoms; and then, oh then, how lovely, how beautiful, will she be indeed!

5. To affrighten thee from sin, consider the misery of sinners at that day. It is called the day of perdition of ungodly men. Sin will be sin indeed at that day. When sin shall be stripped naked of the favour and countenance of great men, of the preferments, and advantages, and riches, and honours, and offices with which it is clothed here below, and instead thereof be invested with fire, and flames, and brimstone, and blackness of darkness, and whips, and serpents, and inconceivable and eternal torments, what an ugly, loathsome strumpet will she be, even in the eyes of them that now dote on her, commit whoredom with her, and sacrifice their strength, and time, and estates, and souls, and God, and Christ, and heaven, and all to her! Then the drunkard will find his liquor more bitter than wormwood, when he shall have a cup of pure wrath, without the least mixture of mercy, brought to him, and he forced to take it down, though there be eternity to the bottom. Then the persecutor of God's people shall find that it had been better to have been rotting in a ditch, or boiling in a furnace of lead, than to have spent his time in wronging the poorest, meanest member of Christ, when God shall recompense tribulation to them that persecute his people, and to them that are persecuted, rest and peace; then every sinner will believe and feel what now, though God himself tell him, he will be an infidel in,

that it is an evil and bitter thing to depart away from the living God. The wicked is reserved, as the beast for the slaughter-day, to the day of destruction; he shall be brought forth, as the condemned malefactor on execution-day, at the day of slaughter. Ah how dreadful will the sinner's doom be then! The tribunal of the Judge will be a tribunal of fire; he shall come in flaming fire, to render vengeance, &c.; the law by which he will try them shall be a law of fire, or a fire of law, Deut. xxxiii. 2; the Judge himself to them will be a consuming fire, Heb. xii. 29; and the judgment which he will denounce against them will be, 'Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels for ever.' Ah who can dwell in everlasting burnings? who can abide devouring flames? Who can imagine the shame that will cover their faces, the horror that will fill their hearts, the terrors, and tortures, and torments that must seize them for ever? If Judah was so ashamed when he saw Tamar's signet and staff, the remembrances of his sin, how will they be confounded when all their revellings and roarings, their chambering and wantonness, their cursing and swearing, and all their sins shall be opened before all the world! If Herod was so affrighted when he supposed that John was risen from the dead—that the Baptist's ghost, by walking in his conscience, robbed him of all comfort—what affrightment will possess them to see the saints whom they have nicknamed, disgraced, imprisoned, and it may be murdered, risen from the dead, owned and honoured by the Judge, and the chief favourites in the heavenly court? If Saul was so troubled when he did hear Christ call to him out of heaven, that he fell to the ground, what trouble, what tribulation, will possess them whom he shall curse with a bitter curse, and call to devils to seize on, and associate with, and prey upon, for ever and ever? The saint shall find mercy, the sweetest mercy, in that day of judgment; but the sinner shall have judgment, the sorest, the most cutting, killing judgment, without the least drop of mercy. If the day when God gave the law was so dreadful, full of thunderings, and lightnings, and fearful noises, that the people cried out, 'Let not God speak to us, lest we die,' and Moses himself did exceedingly quake and fear; and if the day were so dreadful when the Son of God's infinite love bare the curse of the law, that the rocks were rent, the earth trembled, the sun was darkened; how dreadful will that day be when God shall make inquisition into, and deal with the vessels of wrath for the breach of the law! 'Who can abide that day of his coming? who shall stand when he appeareth?' Well may it be called the great and terrible day of

the Lord Jesus. Well might the wise man, when he had seemingly laid the reins on the young man's back, and given him leave to run on in the way of his own heart and eyes, pull him in with this curb, 'Remember that for all these things, God will bring thee to judgment.'

When Sapores, king of Persia, had raised a violent persecution against the Christians, Usthazanes, an ancient nobleman, and a Christian, who in the king's minority had the government of the people, was so terrified that he denied the faith; but sitting at the court-gate, when Simeon, an old bishop and holy person, was leading to prison, he rose up to salute him; but the good bishop, frowning on him, turned away his head with indignation; upon which Usthazanes fell a-weeping, went into his chamber, put off his courtly attire, and burst out into this speech, Ah, how shall I appear before the great God of heaven, whom I have denied, when Simeon, but a man, will not endure to look upon me! If he frown, how will God frown when I come to appear at his tribunal! Upon these considerations he repented of his apostasy, assumed courage, and became a glorious martyr for Christ. If Felix, a heathen, trembled when Paul reasoned of judgment to come—nay, if the very devils so far believe that day as to tremble at the thoughts of it—well may the consideration of that day make Christians tremble at the thoughts of sin, and not dare thereby to treasure up wrath upon their heads against that day of wrath, and the declaration of the righteous judgment of God.

Reader, at this day think much of that day of judgment; hereby thou wilt be stirred up to judge thyself, to repent of sin, to ensure an interest in Christ the Judge, to keep a good conscience, and so to think, speak, and act as one that must be judged by the law of liberty, 1 Cor. xi. 31; Acts iii. 19, and xvii. 31; 2 Peter iii. 11; Eccles. xii. 14; James ii. 12; Acts xxiv. 16.

Eighthly, If thou wouldst exercise thyself to godliness, call thyself often to account. This is a special help to holiness: 'I considered my ways, and turned my feet to thy testimonies,' saith David, Ps. cxix. 59. A man that goeth out of his way will continue wandering, if his mind be occupied about other things, and he consider not what he is doing, and whither he is going. The Christian that is careless of his carriage, and seldom compareth his heart and life with the divine commands, to observe how they agree or disagree, will never order his conversation aright. When a clock is out of order we take it to pieces, and search where the fault lieth, knowing that one wheel amiss may hinder the going of

the whole clock. Our hearts are every day out of order; our work must be to take them to pieces by examination, and to see where the great fault is. Seneca's sober young man, *ita laborat, ita ludit, ita cœnat, ita potat, ita loquitur, ita vivit, ut qui ephemerides patri est approbaturus;* So labours, so playeth, so eateth, so drinketh, so speaks, and so lives, as one that is daily to be accountable for all to his father. He that would keep his spiritual estate must keep his account-books well; the neglect of this hath been the breaking of many tradesmen. When shopkeepers live high, far above their incomes, and for want of searching into their books are ignorant whether their gains will allow such large expenses, it is no wonder if they prove worse than naught. They who expect the coming of great and severe strangers, who will observe narrowly how their house lieth, and how their vessels are kept, and publish it either to their credit or discredit, according as they find, will keep their houses in order, sweep them clean, have their pewter bright and clear, and all things exactly in their places. When the Christian looks every night for the coming of God's deputy, his conscience, to spy and search into his heart and life, how clean and holy both have been kept all the day, it will be a special means to make him watchful over his ways, and exact in his carriage and conversation. Bee-masters tell us, that they are the best hives which make the greatest noise; so that conscience is the best which makes the greatest noise in daily reasonings and debates before its own bar.

Examination is the quickest way to bring the erring sheep home to the fold. Honest men will examine their weights and measures by the standard, that if they be defective they may be mended. The honest heart will examine its thoughts, its words, its actions, by the royal law, that their unsuitableness to its strictness and latitude may be repented of, and to the utmost of its power reformed. 'Let us search and try our ways.' For what cause? What will be the issue of such a scrutiny? 'And turn again to the Lord,' Lam. iii. 40. What man will seek to a physician, or accept his advice, or take his prescriptions, who doth not know himself distempered, and feel his disease? It is examination of our hearts and lives, by the holy and pure law of God, that gives the knowledge of our spiritual sickness, and helpeth us to feel it, to prize our physician, and thankfully and heartily to accept his directions for our cure.

It is observed of the Dutchmen, that they keep their banks, notwithstanding the threats of the insulting ocean, with little cost and

labour, because they look narrowly to them, and stop them up in time. If there be but a small breach, they stop it presently, and hereby save much charge and trouble. Frequent examination will do this courtesy for the Christian; it will maintain his peace with little charge and trouble comparatively. As soon as any breach is made by sin, that arch-makebait, between God and the soul, it will help the Christian to run presently to Christ, to heal and make it up in heaven by his merits; and in the soul, by his purifying and pacifying Spirit.

The counsel which the philosopher gave the young men at Athens may suitably and profitably be applied to Christians, That they should often view themselves in a glass, that if they were fair and well-featured, they should do such things as were beseeming their amiable shape; but if foul and ill-favoured, that then they should labour to salve the body's blemishes by the beauties of a mind accoutred with the ornaments of virtue and good literature.

Examination is a special preservative against sin. No children are more bold to defile themselves, and to play with dirt, or rake in kennels, than those who know their parents are so foolishly fond, like David of Adonijah, that they never displease them at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so? The child that expecteth to be reckoned with at night will be careful how he dirtieth his clothes in the day.

Examination will help the Christian, if not to hinder a coming disease, yet to prevent its growing and increase.

The ship that leaketh is more easily emptied at the beginning than afterwards; the bird is easily killed in the egg, but when once hatched and fledged, we may kill it when we can catch it. A frequent reckoning with ourselves, will pluck sin up before it is rooted in the soul.

Examination will help the Christian that hath fallen and bruised himself to heal the wound whilst it is fresh, before it is festered. This one advantage, if there were no more, is extraordinary. As the sting of a bee, though the bee be fled, works itself into the flesh deeper, and diffuseth its venom more strongly, causing the greater pain, that every man, unless foolish, will speedily pull it out, lest he increase his own anguish; truly so doth sin; though the honey, the pleasure of it, be gone, yet the sting remains; and the longer it is before it is pulled out by faith and repentance, the deeper it works itself into the soul, and the more sorrow it will put us to, in this or the other world.

It is examination at night that brings the soul to mourn for and

repent of its failings in the day. It is like the tree which Ctesias speaks of in describing India, that besides fruit, distilleth certain tears, of which are made precious amber; or as the drops of the vine, it is excellent against the leprosy of sin. Ephesus would never repent till they had examined and considered whence they had fallen.

When sin is admitted into the soul, and as a thief in the night stole in at unawares when the eye of the soul's watchfulness was fallen asleep, examination will light the candle of the word, and search the house narrowly, and find out this ill guest; and before it hath done so much mischief as it intended, apprehend it, indict, condemn, and execute it.

Examination every day is like purging the body at the beginning of a distemper, which takes it before it hath habituated itself, and so is much the more easily repelled. An enemy may much sooner be forced out of his holds, when he hath newly taken possession, than when he hath continued so long as to cast up his banks, make his ditches, placed his guns, and fortified them. After we have been foiled by our spiritual enemies, and by examination find out the cause, it will make us more watchful at that gate at which they entered, and careful of that particular wherein they got the advantage of us. As when David had received intelligence that the Ammonites had given his army some small defeat, he sends Joab word of the reason—'they went too near the city'—and wisheth him to make the battle more strong against the place, 2 Sam. xi.; So examination finds out the reason of a Christian's defeat by Satan:—either it was through self-confidence, or want of spiritual watchfulness, or love to some known sin,—and helpeth the saint to bewail the cause of his defeat, and directeth him how to provide better against the next onset.

Frequent examination keepeth the conscience raw and tender, that the least touch of sin will be offensive and troublesome to it. When the heart is used to yield at a small willow, it will never be quiet under a great oak. Searching into our souls makes sin more loathsome to us. Whilst these filthy sinks are unstirred, they do but little disturb us or annoy us with their filthy savour, but when by examination we rake into them, their noisome stench offendeth us extremely, and shews us what need we have of cleansing.

Examination every night will help the Christian to a good night's rest. How comfortably may he lie down who hath made all even with his Maker, and heard his everlasting Father bidding him good-night! How quietly may he sleep who has his pardon

under his pillow! He needs not fear any officer to call him up at midnight, and attach him for any treasons or misdemeanours.

It is said of Cato, that constantly at evening he would call to mind whatever he had seen, read, or done that day.[1] It was Pythagoras' rule to his scholars, that they should no night suffer sleep to seize their senses till they had three times recalled the accidents and passages of the day. Oh what a shame is it that moralists, who had no true sense of the benefit of such a duty, should out-go the Christian in the performance of it! that many persons should know the chronicles of other countries or kingdoms, some ages past, and yet not know the passages of their own souls one day past!

Reader, if thou wouldst walk closely with God, and keep even with him, reckon daily with him, call thyself to a strict scrutiny: What do I? How live I? Where am I? Is the work I do warrantable by the word or no? Is my life the life of faith, of holiness, or no? Am I in God's way, under his protection, or no? Have I truth of grace, the power of godliness, or do I please myself with the form of it? Do I thrive and increase in grace, or do I decay and decline? Suppose I were to die this night, what ground have I to hope for heaven? What assurance that I shall escape the power and rage of frightful devils? What evidences have I that I am a new creature, engrafted into Christ, and thereby entitled to life and bliss? Thus feel the pulse of thy soul, inquire into its state, visit it often, and see how it doth.

Call thyself to an account for thy sins; let heart and life sins, open and private sins, omissions, commissions, personal, relative, be all reckoned for. Ask thy soul, as Rebekah, Why am I thus? Why am I so false to my God, so unfaithful to my covenants? The heart is like a ditch, into which filth is continually running; and therefore it behoveth thee, by examination, to be always emptying it. The stable that is daily fouled must be daily cleansed; the hands that are daily contracting dirt must be daily washed. Our souls are more polluted and diseased than our bodies; we have always a filthy issue of sin running, which we must be daily searching into and dressing, or our stench will make us loathsome to, and unfit for, any communion with God or his people.

Call thyself to an account daily, for thy mercies; ask thyself, How much am I indebted to my God? what privative, what positive mercies do I partake of? what old, what new, what night, what day, mercies? what mercies at home, what abroad? what personal,

[1] Cicer. de Senec.

what domestical, what national, mercies do I enjoy, or am a sharer in? what bodily, what spiritual, mercies do I receive? what time, what talents, have I to trade with and reckon for? This will help the soul to be speedy and hearty in thankfulness, and force it to David's interrogation, 'What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits?' What hot love should I return, what a holy life should I lead? Do this daily; it is much better to pay sums when they are little, than when they are large. Wise men that are able, find it the best way to pay ready money for their wares. Neglect herein causeth many mistakes and inconveniences, and many times differences, among friends.

Having spoken to this particular in the sixth chapter, I shall say no more to it here, though, indeed, I judge it next to a new nature, not inferior to any means of godliness.

Ninthly, If thou wouldst exercise thyself to godliness, avoid the occasions of sin. He that would avoid the commission of sin, must avoid the occasions of sin. If we would not fall down the hill, we must beware of coming near the brow of it. Keep thee far from an evil matter. Children, which in frost venture upon the ice, may possibly be safe, but yet many times they break their limbs, and sometimes lose their lives. It is possible for a saint to come off safe from occasions of sin, but is very seldom seen. A fair booty makes many a man a thief, who otherwise might have lived honest. It was counted, therefore, a great part of wisdom in Alexander, when he had taken the beautiful daughters of Darius prisoners, not to see the fair ladies, lest their beauty should have enticed him to folly. The same word in Hebrew signifieth both an eye and a fountain, to shew that from the eye, as from a fountain, sin doth too often flow. Job's practice was such, that he would not look on a maid lest he should lust after her; and David's prayer was, 'Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity.' We take the wind of those that are infected with contagious diseases. The wise man gives notable counsel to men, if they would avoid drunkenness: 'Look not upon the wine when it is red, when it casteth its colour in the glass,' Prov. xxiii. 31. When it laughs in thy face, then shut thine eyes, lest it steal into thy heart. We are ready to think, What hurt, what danger is there in beholding the wine in the glass, sparkling and brisky? But Solomon knew, that from looking on it, men come to like it, from liking to tasting, from tasting to a draught, from one draught to another, till the man is metamorphosed into a beast, Gen. xxxix. 10; Ps. cxix. 37. The wise Socrates could advise men to beware of those meats

which would entice men without hunger to eat, and those drinks which would entice a man without thirst to drink, knowing that, if men come within those traps and baits, they are easily taken. A guest may easily be kept out of the house at first, but if once entertained, it is hard to turn him out of doors. When a governor of a fort once comes to parley with the enemy that besiegeth him, there is great fear that the place will be surrendered. I have read of one, that, having a great mind to go to Rome, yet knowing it to be a corrupt place, and a corrupter of others, entered the city with his eyes close shut, neither would he be persuaded to see anything there but Peter's church, which he went to visit. Solomon persuades his son, if he should not be enticed by the harlot, that he would not come near her house: 'Remove thy way far from her, and come not near the door of her house,' Prov. v. 8.

He that carrieth always along with him a heart ready to break out into a flame, prone to all wickedness, had need to take heed of those bellows that will help to blow up the fire. I more fear, saith Luther, that which is within me, than that which is from without. When a distempered stomach comes to meet with tossing waves, sickness ensueth, though the prime cause is not from the billows without, but choler within. Occasion and the heart are like Dinah and Shechem, if they meet, they usually part not till folly is committed. Those that desire to hinder the generation of vice, that brat of hell, must keep the male, occasion, and the female, a wicked heart, asunder, one from the other. They who have bodies always ready to take infection, must be more careful of their diet and company than others; insensible vapours bring forth horrible tempests: 'Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!' The best heart is like a flint; there is fire in it, though it doth not appear; occasion is the steel that fetcheth it forth, which, being let alone, would be quiet. Bees in winter, being sensible of their weakness, keep their hives, and will not expose themselves to the sharp air and bitter frosts, lest thereby they sicken and die. Alas! how weak is man, how unable to resist the occasions of sin!—no more than the hound can forbear pursuing the hare before his eyes, and therefore it concerns him to avoid them. A candle newly extinguished, will quickly be lighted again. Powder meeting with a light match presently takes fire.

For this cause, it was ordained of God in the law of the Nazarite, who did for a time specially consecrate himself to God, that besides his not coming to the dead, and suffering his hair to grow, he should abstain from these things: 1. From wine and strong drink.

2. From the vinegar of wine or strong drink. 3. From any liquor of grapes, though it were but the water wherein they were steeped. 4. From the green or moist grape. 5. From the dried grape or raisin. 6. From the husk or kernel of them, Num. vi. 3, 4. Had the Nazarite eaten but the skin of the grape or raisin, he had broken the law. Hereby the Holy Ghost would teach us that those who separate themselves from the world, to be in a special manner serviceable to the Lord, must avoid not only plain sin, but the appearance of sin, and all occasions of it, though we may look upon them but as the husks of grapes, to be of small moment, and little danger. Beza giveth this reason why the Levite, when he saw the man that fell among thieves, passed on the other side of the way, *Ne cadaveris contactu pollueretur*, Lest he should be defiled with the touch of the corpse. He would be so far from touching a dead carcase, that he would pass on the other side of the way when he saw one dying: 'Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, (*i.e.*, come not near it,) turn from it, and pass away,' Prov. iv. 14, 15.

He that will do all he may, will quickly do what he may not. It is lawful to enjoy bodily pleasures and delights, but not to buy them with hazard to our souls. Soldiers in a garrison that venture to the outmost line, are often snapped up by those that besiege them. We sometimes, when in danger of a siege, burn down those houses in the skirts of the city which might be serviceable to us, when we cannot well defend them, lest they should prove helpful to our enemies against us. Theseus is said to cut off his golden locks, lest his adversaries should in fight take hold of them. Even in things lawful, it is commendable for Christians to deny themselves, when there is danger, by taking liberty therein, of gratifying the enemies of their souls. Cotis, king of Thracia, manifested possibly more prudence than prodigality in breaking the cupboard of curious glasses presented to him, lest, his nature being extremely choleric, he should deal too severely with his servants in case they had broken any of them.[1] Aristotle hath a story of Satyrus, that being a pleader, and knowing himself passionate, and in that drunkenness of the mind apt to commit many indecencies, and to rush into foul extravagancies, he used to stop his ear with wax, lest the sense of ill language should move him to choler.

Reader, as thou wouldst shun sin in the action, shun it in the occasion; remember thou carriest thatch about thee, and therefore

[1] Plutarch.

oughtest to avoid the least sparks.[1] A little wind will drive a ship with the stream and tide, and a small temptation may carry thee that way which thy wicked heart inclines thee. A little pulling will draw a strong man whither he is willing to go; it is safest, therefore, to be out of harm's way, and the greatest magnanimity to fly from the sight of such an enemy as sin is. He hath most true courage who makes a timely retreat before he be wounded.

CHAPTER XII.

Means whereby Christians may exercise themselves to godliness. A humble frame; suppressing sin in its first rise; the knowledge of God.

Tenthly, if thou wouldst exercise thyself to godliness, walk humbly with thy God. A tree, the more deeply it is rooted, the more it groweth under ground, the more upward in fruitfulness. The Christian will find that, by growing in humility, he shall thrive in godliness. He that turneth his eyes upward, is ready to stumble at every rub that lieth in his way; but he that looketh downward, seeth and avoideth those stones. A proud man is like a little man with a high-heeled shoe, raised thereby, in his own conceit, above others of the same rank, but it fits him with many a fall. The proud person giveth not glory to God, and therefore must not expect that God should give grace to him; but the humble man honoureth God, and sanctifieth his name, and sets the crown on his head, and so may expect, because God hath promised, that God should honour him, and sanctify his soul. God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. He leaves those high hills barren, but makes the valleys to abound in corn. It is in vain to undertake to pour liquor into a full vessel, it will all run over; but the empty vessel will receive it. The proud person is full still of self, and so will not be thankful for an alms; but the humble man is empty, hungering and thirsting, and he shall be satisfied. Proud Vashti divorceth herself, and provoketh her lord to disown and disclaim her; but humble Esther is thought worthy of a crown, and admitted into the king's embraces. The fig-tree that blooms not at all, brings forth most pleasant fruit, when the sallow, which hath most glorious palms, is barren. Hypocrisy kills the flower of grace at the root; pride nips it in

[1] Quantum possumus a lubrico recedamus, &c.—*Sen. Epist. ad Lucil.*

the bud. Sincerity, like Paul, planteth grace; humility, like Apollos, watereth it, and helpeth it to flourish. We may take notice all along in Scripture, that the humblest men were the holiest men; and those that were eminent for any grace, were eminent for humility. The deepest streams were most silent, and made the least noise. Abraham was famous for faith, strong in faith, he believed in hope against hope, but lo, how lowly was he: 'Behold I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, who am but dust and ashes.' So Jacob, named Israel by God himself, for his fervency and prevalency in prayer: 'I am less than the least of all thy mercies.' David, that man after God's own heart: 'I am a worm and no man;' as a child weaned from his mother's breasts for humility. So Asaph, Ps. lxxiii. 21; Agur, Prov. xxx.; Isaiah, chap. vi. 3; the Virgin Mary, the centurion, the Syro-Phœnician, Paul, all, like full vessels, sounded not their own praise, and like stars, the higher they were in holiness, the less they appeared. When Elisabeth had conceived, she hid herself three months. They who are most fruitful in holiness, make the least boasting of it. Lord, said holy Hooper, I am hell, but thou art heaven; I am full of sin, but thou a gracious God. Bradford would subscribe his letters, The most miserable, unthankful, hard-hearted sinner, John Bradford. The greater the fire of grace, the less the smoke, or show of it, to the world. The weightiest wheat seeks for the lowest place, when the light chaff flieth in the air.

When the sun is at the highest, the shadow is the least, and the more directly the sun shineth on us, the less our shadow is; so the higher Christians are in God's favour, the lower they are in their own eyes. The more God exalted David, the more he debased himself: 'What am I, and what is my father's house, that thou hast brought me up hitherto? and yet thou speakest of thy servant's house for a great while to come,' 2 Sam. vii. 18, 19. This was David's language, when Nathan brought him word that God would build him a sure house. Those trees which spread much and grow low, near the ground, most commonly bring forth more and larger fruits than high trees, that aspire up into the air. The highest trees are barren—so the proud and high-minded man; but with the lowly is wisdom.

The humble Christian is nearer God than others, and so must needs thrive above others; though God beholdeth the proud afar off, he dwelleth in the humble heart. The lowly Christian is most lovely in his eye, and shall have most of his company. God appeared to Moses, not in a lofty cedar, but in a low, mean, abject

bush. If he that walketh with wise men becomes wise, and is the better for such good company, what good doth the humble Christian get by walking with his God!

Pride is like the remora to a ship, which will arrest it under full sail, hinder the saint in his heavenly passage when he is making the greatest speed; it is like those weeds, which are of so poisonous a nature that they will suffer no good herbs to grow near them. The servant that hath been trusted and honoured by his lord, if he prove a thief and steal from his lord, provokes him to take his stock out of his hands, and to trust him no longer. The proud man steals from God, and robs him of that glory which is due to him; and therefore it is no marvel if he deny to trust such an unfaithful servant with any more spiritual riches.

It is the empty barrel that makes the greatest sound. The poor women that have nothing but a few matches, or pins, or band-strings, or thread-laces, the men that have only a few brooms, or some small coal or roots, make a great stir and loud noise about the city, and would have everybody acquainted with their ware; when the great usurer, that is worth thousands in bills and bonds, and the rich shopkeeper, whose estate swelleth to a vast bulk, never proclaim what they are worth, but rather endeavour to hide it. Those that have least spiritual riches are most guilty of boasting. Laodicea bragged much, that was poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked, and worse than naught. They who are fullest of faith, and richest in good works, make the least sound. When their hearts and lives, like the face of Moses, shine brightly with grace and holiness, they do not, they will not, know it; they consider their greatest light and lustre is but a reflection from the Father of lights, and therefore they have no reason at all to boast of borrowed goods.

The worm of pride breeds soonest in rotten wood. The proud pharisee, who justified himself, had nothing in him but matter of condemnation; when the poor humble publican, affected with his own vileness and baseness, had something of worth in him, even his sense of his own unworthiness. Brass makes a greater sound, and is heard farther, than gold, but every one knoweth there is no comparison between them. Chaff is seen above the wheat, not because it is better, but because it is lighter.

Alas! what is man? what hath man that he should be proud? He is but enlivened dust, moving earth, refined clay, that which beasts trample under their feet. He hath nothing that good is but what he hath received. He lives wholly upon the alms and charity

of another. A proud heart and a beggar's purse do not agree. As he is a sinner, he is more vile and base, more noisome and loathsome, than any toad, or snake, or serpent; and hath he any reason to be proud? Reader, be clothed with humility; learn of thy Redeemer, for he was meek and lowly in heart. Though he thought it no robbery to be equal with God, yet he 'made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant,' Phil. ii. 7, 8.

When pride cometh, then cometh a fall. As a wrestler, if he can lift his fellow from the ground, quickly gives him a fall; so the devil, if he can lift up with pride, doubts not but to throw them. Physicians observe that the dropsy and consumption are usually together; when once thou swellest with this dropsy of pride, expect a consumption of thy godliness. He walks but dangerously who walks on high places, as on the ridges of houses and on ropes; he that walks below is more safe. Angels, Adam, David, Hezekiah, Peter, and many others in Scripture, confirm the wise man's proverb, 'Pride goeth before a fall.' Trees that are set on mountains are easily shaken and torn up by the roots when stormy winds arise. Indeed, it is no wonder that a proud man should fall into sin, for he relieth on his own strength, which is but a broken reed. Peter had not fallen so foully if he had not undertaken to stand upon his own legs, which were too weak to bear his weight. But before honour is humility. The lower the foundation, the higher the building.

A proud man hath a great infelicity, in that he is his own enemy, and makes all others his enemies. God is his enemy; there is no sinner whom he proclaims such open war against, in such express terms, as the proud: 'God setteth himself in battle array against the proud.' It were better earth and hell should unite their force against him than one God. Ah, who knoweth the power of thine anger! Men are his enemies; he disdaineth others for their meanness, or poverty, or want of parts, and they disdain him for his pride. He that overvalueth himself shall soon be undervalued by every one. Pride makes him scorn friends, for familiarity would deprive him, he thinks, of that reverence which he deserves, and therefore all must be his enemies; but he is his own enemy most, in cutting such a gash in his soul by his pride, and making way for all other sins to fall on. He that is lifted up with pride, quickly falls into the condemnation of the devil. Satan had found this vice, pride, by experience so prevalent to draw the creature from God, that he knew no better bait to catch

Adam with, 'Ye shall be as gods;' and when afterwards he encountered David, it was with this weapon—he tempted David to number the people.

Yet, alas! though it be so prejudicial, how natural is it to us! Pride is a weed, a worm that gets into the best garden. It was a witty taunt which a proud cardinal had from a friend of his, that upon his election went to Rome on purpose to see him, where, finding his behaviour stretched to nothing but pride and state, he departed, and put on a mourning suit, and the next day comes in black to visit him. The cardinal, asking the cause why he was in mourning, he answered, It was for the death of humility, which fetched its last breath in him when he was elected cardinal. Most of us have cause to put on mourning upon the same account.

Eleventhly, If thou wouldst exercise thyself to godliness, suppress sin in the beginning. This foul bird is easiest killed in the egg. When a fire is first broke out in a chimney, it may with much less labour be quenched than when it hath seized the timber of the house. What small beginnings had those fires which have conquered stately palaces, and turned famous cities into ruinous heaps! A hair is but a little thing, yet some have been choked with it. If the tetter be not killed, it will come to be a ringworm. Passion at the first kindling may be quenched; but if let alone, sends such a smoke into the understanding, which thickens into a cloud, and hinders us from the sight of ourselves and our duties. The tree may soon be pulled up before it hath taken root, but then it may be too hard for the strongest man. A prick with a pin or a thorn, being let alone, hath sometimes caused the cutting off of a limb, nay, the loss of life. Minutes to sin are like cyphers to a figure, which quickly increase it to vast sums. Sin increaseth by degrees, James i. 14, 15: first it surpriseth the heart in a thought, then it stealeth into the affections for approbation, then the affections plead with the will for its consent, and then that commandeth the act of it, and frequent acts cause a habit, and custom in sin causeth despair, despair causeth men to defend sin, their defence of sin a boasting and glorying in it, and the next step is hell. Sin is therefore fitly by the prophet compared to a chain, for one link draweth another.

As the ivy by little and little creepeth upon the oak, till at last it doth destroy it, so doth sin cling about the soul, and by degrees overrun and undo it. When the water begins to freeze, it will hardly bear a pennyweight; let it alone a little longer and it will bear a shilling, then a pound weight, then a man, then a horse,

then cart and load and all. As the cloud which Elijah's servant saw was at first no bigger than a man's hand, but afterwards it spread till it covered the heavens. Peter first denieth his Master, then sweareth, then curseth, and forsweareth himself. Cain first harbours envious thoughts of his brother, then murdereth him in his heart, then kills him with his hand, then quarrelleth with God, and despaireth. There is no staying, when we are once down the hill, till we come to the bottom. If this giant of sin get in but a limb, he will quickly get in his whole body. Wanton thoughts, if not stifled, bring forth actual uncleanness. Sin is like water—if we give it the least way, run it will in spite of us. If we get not the conquest over it in its infancy, we shall not overcome it when it is brought to maturity. He that cannot put out a spark will be much more unable to put out a flame. The smallest of these twigs will prove thorny bushes, if not timely stubbed up.

The horse must be broken when a colt, and the lion tamed when a whelp. It is best to deal with sin as Jocasta with Œdipus, to cast it forth in its infancy. The Israelite must dash these Babylonian infants against the wall, if he would be a blessed man, Isa. xiii. 18. The Christian that checketh and curbeth sin when it first appeareth, doth, as David to the Philistine, wound it in the forehead, and so slayeth it certainly. As the snail by little and little creepeth up from the root of the tree to the top, consuming the leaves as it goeth, and leaving nothing behind it but filth and slime; so sin gradually infecteth the whole man. This poison, if not presently vomited up as soon as taken down, flieth to and destroyeth the vitals. The apostle calleth it a canker, and truly so it is in regard of its spreading nature, both as to persons, from one man to another, and to parts, from one faculty of the soul and member of the body to another. How dreadful was the effect of a few boys joining with Masaniello in Naples, A.D. 1647, whom the officers and people laughed and jeered at instead of subduing! What murders and burning palaces and churches did ensue and arise from so contemptible means! Therefore, as wise princes will be heedful to suppress riots and petty insurrections, knowing that if they be let alone they will break out into open rebellion, and cause much bloodshed and mischief; so, reader, do thou stifle and kill sin in the womb before it be quick, lest that, like the young serpents, if brought forth, it tear out thy bowels, and its birth cause thy death.

Twelfthly, If thou wouldst exercise thyself to godliness, study the knowledge of God. It is ignorance of God that is the origin of

all sin. Did men know the sad fruits of his fury, they durst not by sin provoke him. Did men know the sweetness of his favour, they would do, they would suffer anything to please him. It is in the mist of ignorance that they lose their way, and wander from him who is the chiefest good. The devil is bound in chains of darkness, and so are all his children.

They who know God most, love him most, and fear him most, and trust him most. It is life spiritual, and the seed of life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent, John xvii. 3. All godliness, all grace, is seminally in the knowledge of God, and floweth from it. They who with open face behold the Lord, though but as in a glass, are changed into his image, from glory to glory; from one degree of grace to another, 2 Cor. iii. 18.

They who know the infiniteness and immensity of his being, cannot but despise all things for him, esteem all things as nothing to him, as nothing without him; look on the whole creation as less than nothing in comparison of him. Ah, what admiring, reverent thoughts of that being of beings, of him whose name is I AM, have they who launch a little, for it is but a little that they can here, into this ocean! All nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity; they cannot but desire and labour to enjoy so boundless a portion.

They who know the power of God cannot but fear him, and stand in awe of his presence and threatenings. They fear him who is able to cast soul and body into hell, Mat. x. 28; Heb. xii. 27, 28. They will depend on him, because there is no want which the Almighty cannot supply, no weakness which he cannot remove, no danger which he cannot prevent or support in. Acquaintance with him who is mighty in strength makes the Christian resolute in God's cause, and as bold as a lion at his call and command.

They who know the eternity of God, will choose him before temporal vanities. What are the pleasures of sin for a season in his eye, who seeth the pleasures at God's right hand for evermore? What are the honours on earth to him who knoweth the eternal weight of glory? What are temporal relations in comparison of the everlasting Father? Nay, what is his natural life to eternal life? No good is little that is eternal. How great, then, is the infinite and eternal God!

They who know the wisdom of God will submit to his providences, and acquiesce in all his dispensations. He is wise in heart, his understanding is infinite, and he knoweth what is best for thee, and

me, and all others, and therefore there is all the reason of the world why I should rest in his will, and be satisfied in his pleasure. It is the Lord, saith the soul in his greatest afflictions, who is infinite in wisdom, and knoweth what will do me most good. Let him do what seemeth good in his eyes.'

They who know the faithfulness of God will credit his word, and make him the object of their hope and faith: 'They that know thy name will trust in thee,' Ps. ix. 10. His truth commandeth our trust. We will rely on faithful men, who will not lie; but the Christian seeth infinitely more reason to rely on the faithful God, who cannot lie.

They who know the mercy, and love, and goodness of God, will love, and admire, and trust, and praise him. The knowledge of his love to us will call out our love to him, as one that deserves it, being infinitely amiable in himself, and the more deserving of our love for his love to such loathsome ones as we are. It will cause us to rely on him; for infinite love, joined with infinite strength and faithfulness, will not, cannot, deceive us. It will help us to see the odious nature of sin, in that it is an abuse of infinite love. The goodness of God will lead the soul to repentance.

They who know the holiness of God will sanctify him in their approaches to him, and walk humbly and watchfully with him. They know that sin is loathsome to him, because contrary to his holy nature, and therefore they hate it. They know that holiness is lovely, as it is his image and excellency, and therefore they follow after it. They are upright, and serious, and zealous, and humble, and reverent in their holy performances, because therein they have to do with such a holy God.

They who know the anger of God will stand in awe, and not sin. They know that God is not to be mocked; for it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, for our God is a consuming fire. They know his fury is terrible, intolerable; none can abide it, no sinner can avoid it. Therefore they hate sin, the object of it, and fly to Christ, who delivereth from it.

Oh what a work, a gracious sanctifying work, doth the knowledge of God make in the soul! It makes the understanding to esteem him above all, the will to choose him before all, the affections to desire him, to delight in him, more than all; the whole man to seek him, to serve him, to honour and praise him beyond all in heaven and earth. What is the reason that God is so much loved, admired, and worshipped, and glorified in his church, when all the world besides despise him, but this, 'In Judah is God known: his name is great in Israel'? Ps. lxxvi. 1.

O reader, be confident of this, the more thou knowest of the excellencies of God, the more thou wilt prize his Son, submit to his Spirit, crucify the flesh, contemn the world, fear to offend him, study to please him, the more holy thou wilt be in all manner of conversation.

Hence the main work of Christ's prophetical office was to reveal God to the world.

And the devil's great work is to keep men from this knowledge of God, knowing that it will tend so exceedingly to their sanctification and holiness, and to the overthrow of his interest. The miller muffleth and blindeth his horse that draweth his mill, and thereby keeps him at his round, deceiving him in making him to think he goeth forward. The first work of the Philistines was to put out Samson's eyes, and then they made him grind at their mill, and make them sport. The eagle, saith Pliny, (Nat. Hist., lib. x. cap. 20,) before he setteth upon the hart, rolleth himself in the sand, and then flieth at the stag's head, and by fluttering his wings, so dustieth his eyes that he can see nothing, and then striketh him with his talons where he listeth. Satan darkeneth men's understandings, and thereby commandeth their wills and affections, and destroyeth the whole man. 'If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that perish, in whom the god of this world hath blinded their minds, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them,' 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

When men are spoken in Scripture to be vicious and profane, they are only said not to know the Lord, 'and there is no knowledge of God in the land,' Jer. iv. 22; Hosea iv. 1; and when God undertakes, in his covenant of grace, to sanctify and make men holy, he is said to put his knowledge in their hearts, and his promise is, 'They shall all know me, from the least to the greatest,' Heb. x.; Jer. xxxi. 34. And they that would grow in grace are commanded, in order thereunto, to grow in knowledge, 2 Pet. iii. 18.

Ignorance is the mother of all irreligion, of all atheism: Eph. iv. 18, 'They are alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts.' As owls, sinners may see in the night of this world, have some knowledge in worldly affairs; but they cannot see in the day, are ignorant of spiritual, of heavenly things. Sin, like the pestilence David speaks of, walketh in the dark, Ps. xci. 5; and Satan is the enemy that soweth his tares by night. This is one cause why sin is called a work of darkness. It is from that darkness which is in men's understandings that they turn their backs upon God, and run upon

their own eternal ruins. It were impossible for the rational creature to be so desperately mad as to play with the wrath of God, and slight the love of God, to neglect his mercy, and despise his justice, if they did but know God. When princes go *incognito*, in a disguise, and are unknown, then they are disesteemed. Hence they who are obstinately profane and resolved on wickedness say unto God, 'Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways,' Job xxi. 14. The hooded hawk, that seeth not the partridge, will never fly after it. The Israelites pitched in Mithkah, which signifieth sweetness, before they removed to Cashmonah, which signifieth swiftness. They only who know the sweetness of God will fly to him with swiftness. *Ignoti nulla cupido.* He who knoweth the all-sufficiency of God will never turn to the creature; even as the bee, if it did not find honey enough in one flower, would never hasten to another.

Those that are ignorant of God abound in all manner of atheism and wickedness. The families which know not God will not call on his name. There is no truth, no mercy, but lying and stealing, and swearing and killing, where there is no knowledge of God, Hosea iv. 1, 2. It is no wonder to see blind men stumble and fall, and break their limbs. I do not marvel to see ignorant men, who know not God, to live without him, to turn him out of their hearts and houses, as if they had no dependence on him, or engagements to him.

Whence is it that men are regardless of their souls and eternal estates, that they dance over the unquenchable lake, and are merry and jovial at the very brink of destruction; that they despise the God that made them, preserveth them, bought them, and hath them in his hands and at his mercy every moment; that they slight his Son, his Spirit, his law, his love, his wrath, his promises of eternal life, as if they were things of no value, and rather fit to be trampled on than esteemed; that they can lie down and sleep, and rise up and eat, and drink, and follow their sports and pleasures, and laugh and sing under the guilt of sin and curse of the law, and infinite wrath of the Lord, but their ignorance of God? Ah, did they but know his holiness, his jealousy, his power, his justice, they would sooner undergo any misery that men could inflict on them, than incur his anger, or provoke him to jealousy; they would never neglect his worship, or put him off with a few heartless prayers. *Ludentes cum Deo ut pueri cum suis pupis*, as Calvin hath it; playing with him, as children with their babies, when they come immediately to his presence, and pretend to seek his face.

The holy times under the gospel, wherein the people of God should be of one heart, are spoken of as proceeding from this cause: 'The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as waters cover the sea,' Isa. xi. 9. The perfection of grace and holiness in heaven will be the effect in part of this knowledge of God. When we shall see him (perfectly) we shall be (perfectly) like him, 1 John iii. 2.

Reader, be persuaded, therefore, to study this knowledge of God; think no labour too much for it; pray, and read, and hear, and confer, and mourn that thou mayest know God. Believe it, it is a jewel that will pay thee well for all thy pains. Incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thy heart unto understanding. Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God: 'For the Lord giveth wisdom, and out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding,' Prov. ii. 2-6. Did men but spend that time and strength about the knowledge of God which they spend in endeavouring to raise their families, and advance their parties and interest, and to suppress them that in their apprehensions stand in their way, we should quickly have a nation as famous for peace, and love, and holiness, as now it is notorious for divisions and profaneness.

CHAPTER XIII.

Means whereby Christians may exercise themselves to godliness. A contented spirit; avoiding those things that hinder godliness.

Thirteenthly, If thou wouldst exercise thyself to godliness, labour to get a contented frame of heart. A settled, fixed frame of heart as to all outward occurrences, is like ballast to a ship, which will help it to sail trim in all waters; whereas a discontented spirit is as a light, small boat in the ocean, tossed about with every blast, and always in danger of drowning. I doubt not but the great apostle's diligence to learn this lesson perfectly—'I have learned in what state soever I am to be contented; I know how to be abased, and how to abound,' Philip. iv. 12—was a special means of his extraordinary growth and proficiency in grace. It is generally observed that peevish persons, whom nothing pleaseth, are usually lean and thin in their bodies; but those who are of cheerful tempers, and

not overmuch troubled with any disasters, are thriving and healthful. The discontented soul, whom every heat or cold above ordinary puts into a fright or fever, will rather decline than increase in his spiritual health; but the Christian who is ever cheerful in his God and Saviour, and lives about these lower things as one indifferent about them, will never be hindered by them in his work of holiness. As a sickly man is hindered in his journey by every storm, and ready to run to a house, or stand under a hedge, at every shower; so is a discontented person ready to turn aside, or stand still, at every unexpected providence, when a contented man, like a lusty, resolved traveller, keeps on his course whatsoever weather comes. Godliness requires a contented mind to grow in, 1 Tim. vi. 6. It is said of the pelican that she is caught by the shepherds in this manner: they lay fire not far from her nest, which she finding, and fearing the danger of her young, seeks to blow out with her wings so long till she burns herself, and makes herself a prey, out of foolish pity to her young. So many men, out of unwise pity to their relations and possessions, when they are at any time in danger for want of this contented spirit, and quiet submission to infinite wisdom, trouble themselves so much and so long about them, till they make themselves a prey to Satan, and no whit preserve or secure those persons or things about which they are so immoderately anxious and solicitous.

Whilst we are in this world we must expect various winds—some sharp, some warm, some nipping, some refreshing, some with us, some against us; and unless we are prepared for all by a holy pliableness, we shall be injured by every one. Every strong wind, whether with us or against us, will be ready to overturn us if we want this ballast. There is no condition in this life so blessed as to afford the perfection of content; and yet there is no estate in this life so wretched but a Christian may be contented with it. If thou hast as much as thou wantest, thou hast as much as in reason thou desirest, and therefore hast cause to be contented.

The way to true riches, saith Plato, is not to increase our heaps, but to diminish the covetousness of our hearts. It were well for the world, saith another, if there were no gold in it; but since it is the fountain whence all things flow, it is to be desired, but only as a pass to travel to our journey's end without begging. Every man is rich, or may be so, if he will equal his mind to his estate, and be but poor in his desires. He that hath most wants something, as Haman, when he had the commander of one hundred and twenty

provinces at command. He that hath least wants nothing, if he wants not a contented spirit.

He that can bring his heart to an even poise in all providences will avoid many temptations, and escape many snares in which others are entangled. The want of this renders many a man's life as unserviceable to God as uncomfortable to himself. The discontented person, like the sea, is seldom seen without storms and tempests. A small matter puts him out of order and joint, and so unfits him for spiritual actions. As hot iron, the smallest drop sets him a hissing; like a ruffled skein of silk, every way taken to compose him entangleth him. Discontent, like ink poured into a bottle of water, turns all into blackness. O friend, beware of it!

It hinders from praying. A discontented man will rather pour out his passions than any sober prayers before the Lord.

It hinders examining ourselves. Though quiet and calm waters will, like a glass, if we look into it, shew us the image and likeness of ourselves, yet troubled and muddy waters will make no such representation. Though the heart, when calm and contented, may shew us the face and features of our souls, yet if muddied by discontent they cannot do it, John xiv. 27; Ps. lv. 4, 5.

It hinders from hearing. The noise of passion drowns the voice of the preacher. Men must with meekness receive the ingrafted word, if they desire it should save their souls, James i.

When a fountain is troubled, there can no water be drawn out of it but what is filthy and unsavoury. When a person is discontented, all his duties are distasteful and unacceptable to God. Therefore, Christ more than once dissuades his disciples from it: 'Let not your hearts be troubled. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid,' John xiv. 1, 27.

Diogenes resolved, since many evils would befall him, to keep himself steady in all. He would oppose resolution to fortune, nature to the law, his reason to his affections. But the Christian hath a better guide, and better grounds for contentedness.

There be several thoughts which may quiet and compose the heart in all occurrents.

1. That infinite wisdom ordaineth whatsoever befalleth me, and the present condition that I am in is ever best for me. If a greater portion of outward good things had been good for me, I had had it. My Father is not so careless of his children as to deny them anything that is good for them; and if it be not good for me, why should I desire it? He acteth without reason, as well as without religion, who craveth what is hurtful to him. If my condition

were cut out by the will of malicious men, I might have some ground of grumbling; but when it is cut out by the infinite wisdom of a gracious God, I have not the least cause of discontent. I take it ill if my children be not satisfied with what food and raiment I think fitten for them; and may not God much more take it ill at my hands if I sit not down quietly with his allowance, be it more or less?

2. That the smallest mercy is above my merits. If my condition be not so good as I desire, yet it is better than I deserve; if my estate be not so flourishing as I would it should be, it is not so bad as I know it might have been. Beggars must not be choosers; they who have nothing but of charity and alms, must be satisfied with a bare allowance, and contentedly be at another's disposal: 'Why doth living man complain?' Lam. iii. 39. Man, a reasonable creature, and complain against his Maker! Living man complain, when the most miserable estate out of hell is a mercy to him!

3. That, be our estate as low as it will, it is better than we brought with us into the world. Some give us this reason why man, when none besides of the visible creatures, is born naked, weeping, helpless, but to teach him contentedness. Have I any food? I brought none with me. Is my garment coarse and thin? I was born naked. Am I blessed with any comforts? I came into the world without any: 'Naked came I into the world, and naked shall I go out of the world; the Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord.'

4. That a better condition might and would make me worse. If I were mounted high in the world, I should be like the flag at the top of the mast, more liable to storms and winds. The full purse invites the thief, and perhaps may occasion a stab, when the empty pocket is secure, and the poor man may travel the road without any such danger. Low shrubs escape many a cold blast with which tall trees are assaulted: 'They have no changes; therefore they fear not God,' Ps. lv. 19. Atalanta lost the wager she ran for, by gathering up the golden apples which Hippomenes for that purpose had thrown in her way.

5. That others, who are better than I, and more holy, are worse for this world, and suffer more hardships. In spiritual things look on those above thee, that by an honest emulation thou mayest reform and amend; but in temporal things look on those below thee, that thou mayest not complain or murmur. How many are in fetters, wandering up and down from house and home, set upon

the rack of diseases, and have an ounce of misery for every drachm which thou hast? Stay, sirs, said the wise Harry in the fable, let our estate content us; for as we run from some, so others run from us.

6. That all shall work for my good. The saint is sure to thrive by his sufferings. When children meet with nuts, or apples, or primroses, in their way, those are ofttimes occasions to make them loiter in their errands, incur their parents' anger, and sometimes their late return finds the door shut against them; when such as meet with danger make the more haste, and their speed procureth them the greater welcome. They who meet with pleasures are apt to loiter; they who meet with miseries make the more haste, and shall find the better cheer. The Christian hath a promise, and the very Godhead of the Almighty engaged for its performance: 'We know that all things shall work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpose,' Rom. viii. 28. Why should not the Christian, with a holy resolution, hold a steady course in all weathers; and though he be forced with cross winds to shift his sails and catch at side winds, yet wisely steer and keep on his course by the *cape of good hope*, when he may be certain that every wind that bloweth shall help him forward to his eternal joyful haven. Though we cannot see how some passages of God's providence, as persecution, oppression, loss of relations or estates, sickness or disgrace, should do otherwise than hurt and injure us; and are ready to darken counsel by words without knowledge, and to say, as Jacob, 'Joseph is not, and Simeon is not; all these are against me.' Children are not, honours are not, riches are not, liberty is not; all these are against me. But Christ may say to us of such severe dispensations, as once to Peter, 'What I do thou knowest not now, but shalt know hereafter.' The issue will prove a truth in God's promises, and the conclusion will speak what was in the womb of the promises. I am confident, when God sendeth afflictions, they are at that season more fit for me than outward mercies; and though at present I am ready to blaspheme, yet when I find the fruit of them in being thereby partaker of his holiness, I bless him for them. A Lacedæmonian woman, when Sparta had got the day in a battle, could not only submit, but rejoice, though her five sons were slain in the fight. If I get the victory over one sin, I have cause to rejoice, though it cost me some outward comforts.

7. That the more I repine, the worse I make my condition. A discontented man, like one in a barrel of pikes, which way soever he turns, he finds something that pricks; he is best at ease when

he lieth still. Murmuring turns whips into scorpions, and makes that which would be but as a little finger, heavier than weighty loins. They who by an even poise may sit safe in a boat when the waters are rough, by rising up or stirring are drowned. Passions, like rain or mist to the best firs,[1] breed vermin in the soul. Because this man hath not what his lust craveth, he enjoyeth not what God hath given him; but like an ass, feedeth on herbs, whilst he carrieth better food on his back for others. A single mischief by discontent is made double. The prisoner galls his legs by striving with his fetters.

8. The examples of others may have some prevalency with us; Abraham, Moses, Paul were eminent for this grace.

Many heathen who were ignorant of the wisdom, goodness, and faithfulness of God, yet upon principles of morality were constant and even in their behaviours, not changing their countenances with the change of their fortunes and conditions, but bringing their mind to their estates, when they could not bring their estates to their minds. Xantippe said of Socrates that she always found him returning home—though he often met with affronts and abusive language abroad—with the same face and carriage with which he went out. Furius Camillus was ever like himself, neither by obtaining the dictatorship inflamed with arrogancy, nor, being banished his country, sick with melancholy. The whole body of Rome, after their disaster at Cannæ, where their consul was slain, and the flower of their gentry and soldiery cut off by Hannibal, when the whole world did ring their passing bell, and judged their fortune dying and desperate, were even then heroic in their carriage, and acted nothing unworthy their former greatness. In their Asian enterprise they proposed, before the battle, conditions to Antiochus, as if they had conquered him; and after the fight and victory offered him the same terms as if they had not conquered.

Abdolomius, a poor gardener, though of the king's stock, when advanced by Alexander to be king of Zidon, and asked by him how it was possible for him to endure his poverty with contentedness, answered, I pray the gods I may continue the government of this kingdom with the like mind; for those hands were sufficient for me to live by, and as I had nothing, so I wanted nothing.

9. The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. He doeth thee no wrong, he cannot do thee any wrong; now why shouldst thou complain when not injured? It is unreasonable to murmur when a man hath right done him.

[1] Qu. 'furs'?—Ed.

10. God is gracious and good in all his dealings with thee.

If thine estate be but little, yet that little, with the fear of the Lord, is better than the possessions of many wicked men, Ps. xxxvii. A penny which is the earnest of some great bargain, is another manner of thing than an ordinary penny, and more worth than many pounds, being given and received under another notion. Thy little is an earnest of infinitely more than thou canst imagine, and therefore more precious than others' thousands. A dinner of herbs, with the love of thy God, is infinitely more eligible than the stalled oxen of the wicked, and his wrath therewith. Who would desire Eglon's present with the dagger, Sisera's milk with the nail and hammer, and Haman's banquet with the gallows that trod upon the heels of it? Truly such is the riches of every wicked man.

The smallness of thy temporal may increase thy spiritual estate. If God recompense thy want of earthly with a supply of heavenly riches, thou art no loser. Nicephorus tells us of one Cyrus, a courtier in the time of Theodosius the younger, who, through the envious occupation of some favourites, being spoiled of his goods, of a pagan became a Christian, and of a Christian a minister of Christ. Eudoxia, the daughter of a philosopher in Athens, being cast out of her father's house by unkind brethren, and coming to Constantinople to beseech Theodosius to right a poor orphan, found such favour in his eyes that he made her his queen. Affliction is the way to honour with men, to more holiness from God, when prosperity causeth our fall both into sin and misery. He holds the garments of his godliness fast in a boisterous wind, who would lay it off in a sunny day.

Lastly, If thou wouldst exercise thyself to godliness, take heed of those things that will hinder thee therein. As if a man would have his trees to thrive, he must not only open the earth sometimes and mind its watering, but also lop off superfluous branches; and as a gardener, if he would have his herbs and flowers to flourish, must be sure to keep his banks and beds well weeded, as well as dunged or watered; so if thou wouldst thrive and flourish in godliness, there is a necessity of avoiding what is hurtful to it, as well as of using what is helpful.

There be several things which will keep a Christian from the exercise of his holy calling, some of which I shall but briefly name, having had occasion to speak of others, and also to these, in other chapters.

1. Avoid evil company. Wicked persons delight to have or to

make fellows. Hence we find in Scripture that they go as the unclean beasts into the ark in pairs: Adam and Eve, Simeon and Levi, Ammon and Jonadab, Hymeneus and Alexander, Phygellus and Hermogenes, Ananias and Sapphira. Can a man take fire in his bosom and not be burned? Expect not that the flowers of thy graces should flourish unless these weeds be removed from them. He that walketh in the rain must expect to be wet; he that walketh in the sun must expect to be tanned; and he that walks among polluting persons must expect to be polluted.

2. Take heed of idleness. An idle man is like a heap of dry straw, quickly fired by the sparks of Satan's temptations, Prov. xxviii. 19; 1 Tim. v. 13; 2 Thes. iii. 10, 11.

Whilst the oyster lieth gaping against the sun, he is devoured by the crabfish. Whilst the Christian lieth lazying on the bed of idleness, he is a prey to Satan.

The purest river water, if it stand still in a vessel, will become unsavoury. The best corn, if not stirred, will be musty. As the caterpillar consumeth the leaf, and the canker the rose, so will idleness thy godliness, Ezek. xvi. 49.

As men in war lying in the field, if they be slothful and lie lazying on the ground, must expect to be a prey to their enemies; the Amalekites found this by experience. The sluggard will rather be killed than take the pains to defend himself. A slothful man, who will not employ his stock, cannot expect to improve his stock. The diligent hand maketh rich, in goods and in grace.

3. Love not the world. The thorns of the world hinder the growth of the good seed of grace. This world's best, are the other world's worst husbands. It is hard for the periwinkle in the sea to swim, because of the house on her back; it is impossible for them to swim heavenward who have the world, not on their backs, but in their hearts. The more thou delightest in this world, the more thou wilt neglect the other world. He who is taken with, and fond of a harlot, will quickly abate in his love to, nay cast off, his honest wife. The palm-tree is least at the bottom, and the higher it groweth, the thicker and greater it is, contrary to all other trees. The higher a Christian mounts in his affections, and the more heavenly he is, the more he will thrive in Christianity. The child cannot thrive that feedeth on dirt; the more a man loveth the earth, the less he will do or suffer for heaven. Such Esaus will sell the birthright for a mess of pottage; such Gehazis will dishonour and belie their master for a talent of silver; such Achans will destroy themselves and families, and trouble a whole Israel,

for a wedge of gold; such Judases will sell their Lord and Saviour for a goodly price, thirty pieces; for a piece of bread such a one will transgress. The fire which breaks out of this bramble devours the cedars of Lebanon. The Athenians did set up a pillar, wherein they published him to be an enemy to their city who should bring gold out of Media as an instrument to corrupt them. Inordinate love of creatures is a canker which in time will eat up the very life of godliness. Reader, if thou art risen with Christ, seek those things that are above, where Christ is. It is recorded by divers historians, both of the East and West Indians, and some blackamoors in Guinea, between both, that many subjects willingly die with their princes, and women with their husbands; that some men give their wives, others their children, others their servants, to be buried alive in the grave with their kings, to serve him, as they conceit, in the other world; that some women cast themselves into the fire in which the dead bodies of their husbands are consumed. If these can cast away and contemn the world and all things in it for the love of a poor wretched creature, what a shame is it to Christians if the love of Jesus Christ, their head, their prince, their husband, do not mortify them to the world, and make them despise all in it, to enjoy him whilst they live, and to be with him where he is when they die!

4. Allow thyself in no known sin. This is like a thief used to the shop, which will steal away all thy gains, and keep thee assuredly from thriving in thy heavenly calling. There is no possibility of making religion thy business without the gracious concurrence of the Holy Spirit; he it is that must lay the foundation, rear up the building, and perfect what he beginneth; but thou canst not expect his company or assistance if thou harbourest any corruption in thy heart. Though this dove may fly to thee, desirous to make its abode with thee, as the dove went out of the ark, yet if it behold the earth under water, thy heart in any way of wickedness, it will return again whence it came; doves will lie clean, or be gone. Bees will not continue in a stinking or impure hive; therefore those that would not lose them, prepare the stools where they set them with perfumes and sweet-smelling boughs, lest ill savours force them to forsake their stations. Thus, saith Chrysostom, deals the Holy Spirit; our souls are the hives, which, if perfumed with grace, invite his presence, but, if polluted with any known sin, provoke him to depart. Oh let there not be any way of wickedness in thee, if thou wouldst run the way of God's commandments!

CHAPTER XIV.

Motives inciting Christians to exercise themselves to godliness. The vanity of other exercises. The brevity of man's life. The patterns of others.

Thirdly, I shall annex some motives to quicken thee to exercise thyself to godliness, and then conclude the treatise.

First, Consider the vanity of all other exercises and labours. The wise man begins his Ecclesiastes with vanity of vanities, all is vanity; and after a large and exact demonstration thereof, makes this use, and ends his book with, 'Hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man.' It may be, reader, thou takest much pains and spendest much time; thou risest early, and sittest up late; and wastest thy body, and wearest out thy strength; and toilest and moilest about the things of this life; but, alas! to what purpose? to what profit? The foot of all thy accounts, when at the end of thy life the total comes to be summed up, will be only ciphers, and signify nothing. Thou workest all this while at the labour in vain. Like the disciples, thou fishest all night, and catchest nothing. Thou spendest thy strength for what is not bread, and thy labour for what will not satisfy. If the word of truth, and the God rfo whom it is impossible to lie, may be believed, all the things of this life separated from godliness are lying vanities, broken cisterns, ashes, lies, wind, vanity of vanities, and things of naught, Jonah ii. 8; Jer. ii. 13; 1 Sam. xii. 21; Hosea x. 13, and xii. 1; Eccles. i. 2; Hab. ii. 13. It is Chrysostom's saying, that if he had been to preach to all the world, and could so have spoken that all should have heard him, he would have chosen that text, 'O mortal men, how long will ye love vanity, and follow after leasing!' Democritus gave that for the reason of his continual laughter, which occasioned his countrymen to look on him as distracted, that when he beheld the labour and diligence, the running and riding, the sweating and panting, nay, the fighting and killing of men to get one above another, and to heap up a fading treasure, he could not but deride their folly.

Indeed, though the heathen laughed at the ridiculousness of such persons, the sensible Christian seeth great cause to weep at the emptiness and unprofitableness of such actions, and the madness of the agents. Cyprian advised his friend Donatus to sup-

pose himself at the top of the highest mountain, and thence to behold the tumults and chances of this wavering world, and told him that then he could not but either laugh at it, or pity it. It is no such wonder that brutish horses should leave good provender to feed on litter, as some jades do; but that men who are indued with reasonable souls, that seeming Christians, who have a table spread before them with hidden manna, with angels' food, with meat indeed, and drink indeed, with all the dainties of heaven, should neglect these and feed on ashes, may well be matter both of admiration and lamentation.

The Holy Ghost tells such, that they follow after vain things, which cannot profit them, 1 Sam. xii. 21. All outward things are like an olive or date stone—hard to crack or cleave; but when with much labour they are opened, they are nothing worth.

The wise moralist, speaking of such laborious loiterers as work hard for nothing, compares them to such as spend many months to learn to write with their feet, and when they have learned it, are never the better for it. Cæsar compares them to such as fish for gudgeons with a golden hook—hazard more than the fish when taken are worth. Life is precious; health, and strength, and time are precious, because all these have a relation to an eternal estate; now how foolish is he that wasteth them upon toys and trifles, and neglecteth provision for the other world! 'Surely every man walketh in a vain show; surely they are disquieted in vain,' Ps. xxxix. 6.

Observe, reader, how dearly men pay for their gilded nothings, for their earthen potsherds covered with silver dross; they walk up and down, run hither and thither, disquiet themselves with cares and fears, and heart-piercing frights and vexations, for a vain show: 'The people labour in the fire, and weary themselves for very vanity,' Hab. ii. 13. Their work is hot and hard; they labour in the fire, even to lassitude and weariness. But is it about the noble concernments of their immortal souls? Is it that their sins may be pardoned, the vitiosity of their natures healed, and that their souls may be fitted for the heavenly mansions? No, it is for very vanity; for that which will not afford them the least good, or make them in any respect better or blessed. Alas! how much below, nay, contrary to, reason doth man act, to cast away pearls upon swine, gold upon dross, diamonds upon dirt—to throw away his time and seasons of grace, which are more worth than rubies, than all riches, upon that which is vanity and vexation of spirit!

It was a worthy check which Cyneas the orator gave to the

monstrous ambition of Pyrrhus. When that king of Epirus was solicited by the Tarentines, and other people in Italy, to become the head of their league against the Romans, whilst he was musing upon that affair, his favourite Cyneas came into his presence, and perceiving the king in a study, desires the knowledge of his thoughts. Pyrrhus courteously opens his heart to him, and asketh his advice whether he were best to accept of that honourable offer or no, but resolving before to join with them, and promised himself success. The orator answered him, That in case he should join with them and prevail, what would he then do? Pyrrhus told him, Then Sardinia and Sicily will be at my command. Cyneas consented, and replied, What then will you do? Pyrrhus told him, Then Africa will soon be conquered. Cyneas asked, What then will you do? Then said Pyrrhus, Greece will yield to my victorious arms. Cyneas continued, When Greece is brought under, what will you do next? The king, perceiving the intention of his favourite, replied, smiling, Then, Cyneas, we will sit still, rest ourselves, and be merry. That, said Cyneas, you may do presently without any bloody fight or barbarous outrageous acts, without tiresome marches, pinching quarters, tormenting fears of losing the day, without any hazard or danger to yourself or others.

Truly, reader, I may tell thee, if thou art one that busiest thyself about a throng of worldly businesses, and crowdest thy mind and heart with projects and designs to increase thy heaps, and advance thy name, and provide for thy children, and procure thyself a comfortable subsistence for a few days, that after all thy care, and trouble, and restlessness, and vexation, and hazards, and dangers, thou wilt be never the better; thou wilt but, like them that spend their time, and money, and thoughts for the philosopher's stone, reap thy labour for thy pains, and find all unprofitable. Felix Platerus is of opinion that all alchymists are mad, in being so laborious for nothing.

May I not say to thee truly concerning thy pains and time, what Judas did falsely concerning the ointment, 'To what purpose is this waste?' To what purpose is thy waste of time, and strength, and health? Alas! what profit will all thy pains bring thee in?

The vanity of other labours will appear in that all other things are unsuitable, deceitful, unsatisfying, vexatious, and uncertain.

1. Unsuitable to thy soul. Gold is unsuitable to hunger, food to the sick, honour to the weary; so are all the comforts of this life to thy soul. What is an earthly treasure to the poor in spirit? what is the best physic-garden to a wounded conscience? what are

all the dainties on the table of the creation to one that is hungry and thirsty after the righteousness of Christ, and the grace of the Spirit? Bodily things are not suitable to our spirits, nor temporal substance to an immortal soul. The fattest increase of the earth is from the excrements of beasts, which must needs be far from answering the nature of a heaven-born spirit.

2. Deceitful. As Jael to Sisera, the world brings forth meat to us in a lovely dish, and saith, Come in, my lord, turn in; but she puts her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the workman's hammer. With the hammer she smites foolish Siseras that trust her; she smites off their heads after she hath pierced their temples. It serveth its greatest darlings in their extremity, as Plutarch reporteth Pompey to have served Cicero, who, when Cicero fled to him in his misery for succour, fled out at a back-door, and left him to the mercy of his enemies. The world, next man's heart, is the greatest cheat and impostor in the world. Like a host, it welcomes us in our inns with smiles and embraces, but kills us in our beds, when we suspect no such matter. As the wise man wisheth thee to be moderate and abstinent at a full table, and to put a knife to thy throat, for they are deceitful meat; so I may say of all the dainties and delicates of the creation, they are deceitful meat, pleasant, but poison. Like the bramble, the world promiseth us protection and refreshment under its shadow, if we will suffer it to be our king, and reign over us; but a fire comes out of it to destroy the cedars of Lebanon, the souls of men.

As the plover, to put a man out of his way, flieth before him, clapping her wings, that he, minding the noise she makes, and following her, might not find her nest; so the world, with its noise and clamours, its songs and music, keeps men still in admiration of her, and hinders them from finding out her cozenage and thievery: 'He that trusteth in vanity, vanity shall be his recompense,' Job xv. 31. It is reported of one Oromazes that he had an enchanted egg, in which, as he boasted himself, he had inclosed all the happiness of the world; but, being broken, nothing was found in it save wind. Truly such is the world's inside, wind, whatever appearance it hath in the eye of a worldling. As the forbidden tree seemed to promise knowledge to our first parents, but it took their knowledge from them, and brought in ignorance; so the world promiseth great matters, much joy and delight, but payeth us with the contrary—sorrow and horror. The worldling's voice is like that of the thief, 'Come, let us lay wait,' &c.; 'We shall find all precious substance, and fill our houses with spoil;' when, alas!

instead of precious substance, they find pernicious shadows; and instead of filling their houses with spoil, they fill their hearts with gall and wormwood. The world, as a cunning courtezan, flattereth and fawneth upon the young gallant, to commit spiritual uncleanness with her, and then casteth him from the height of fancied delights into the depth of real horror, Prov. i. 10, 11.

3. Unsatisfying. All these sublunary comforts are but skin-deep. As a mist, they may wet the blade, but leave the root of the corn dry; they may cause a smile in the face, but cannot refresh the heart, or satisfy the soul. The countryman thinks, if he were at the top of some high hill he should touch the heavens; but when, with much pains, and sweat, and toil, he is gotten thither, he finds himself deceived. Men think if they could attain to such a degree of honour, or such a quantity of riches, or enjoy such brutish pleasures, then they should be satisfied, but they find their thirst after creatures as immoderate as before; like men in a fever or dropsy, the more they drink, the more they desire: 'He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth gold with increase.' Many men have too much of the world, but no worldly man hath enough; his voice still is like the horse-leech, Give, give. Though he hath enough to destroy him, yet he hath not enough to content him. When the Parthians had taken Crassus, the covetous Roman who had robbed the temple, they poured molten gold into his mouth, saying, Drink now thy fill, thou greedy wretch, of that which thou hast so long thirsted after. The covetous caliph of Babylon, when taken prisoner, was set by the great Khan of Tartary in the midst of those treasures which he had wretchedly scraped together, and bidden eat his fill and satisfy himself, but amongst all his heaps of silver and gold he was miserably famished.[1] The soul will starve, for all the food which the whole world affordeth it. A worldling is like Tantalus, who had apples at his lips and water at his chin, yet pined for want; in the midst of his sufficiency, he is in straits. If thou triest the whole creation, and empanellest every creature upon the jury, to inquire where satisfaction is to be had, they will write *Ignoramus* upon the bill. If thou askest the sea, it will answer, as concerning wisdom, 'The sea saith, It is not in me; and the depth saith, It is not in me; the earth saith, It is not in me.' Ask every worldly blessing particularly, and it will say, It is not in me. Thou mayest call and cry to them in thy need for comfort, as eagerly and earnestly as Rachel for children, and each will answer,

[1] Turkish History, 113.

as Jacob did here, 'Am I in God's stead, that hath withholden thy desire from thee?' or as the angel to the woman, 'Why seek ye the living among the dead? he is risen, he is not here.' Am I, a poor finite being, in God's stead, to satisfy the vast desires of thy capacious soul? Why seekest thou living comforts amongst dead creatures? it is gone, it is not here. The world entertains its best guests no better than Caligula did his favourites, whom he invited to a feast, and when they were come, set golden dishes and golden cups empty before them, and told them they were welcome, and he would have them feed heartily. All the trees in the garden of the creation are like those trees which Solinus mentioneth in Assyria, the fruit whereof seemeth as yellow as gold, but, being touched, is as rotten as dirt.

4. The things of this world are vexatious. Their sting paineth far more than their honey pleaseth. They are like the Egyptian reed, which will not only fail them that trust it, but also pierce them with splinters, and wound them deeply sooner or later: 'They who will be rich, pierce themselves through with many sorrows,' 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. Instead of satisfaction, thou wilt find vexation. The things of this world are not only wind for their vanity, but also thorns for the vexation they cause. As when the blood is corrupted by a poisoned arrow, it flieth to the heart, thinking to find some remedy there; but as soon as it toucheth the heart, it findeth death where it looked for life. Thus men that are pressed with miseries, run to the world as their refuge, hoping to find comfort and refreshment there; but, alas! that doth increase their afflictions, and gives them rather matter of more mourning than any abatement of their sorrows. They who dive into the bottom of this sea of the world, to the hazard of their lives, instead of the pearl of contentment and happiness, which they take such pains for, bring up nothing but their hands full of the sand and gravel of vexation and anguish. All the ways of worldly delights are strewed with nettles and briers, so that its greatest darlings are but like bears robbing a bee-hive, that with much labour get a little honey, but are soundly stung for their pains. Therefore reason, much more religion, may sound a retreat, and call us off from our eager pursuit of these lying vanities. *Car où il n'y a rien à gagner que des coups, volontiers il n'y va pas:* No man makes haste to the market, where there is nothing to be bought but blows.

5. Uncertain. There is no constancy in outward comforts. As brooks in winter are carried with violence, and run with a mighty stream, flowing over with abundance of water on every side, when

there is no want nor need of waters; but in the heat of summer is dried up, when water is scanty and hard to be had; such is the friendship of the world; it will promise us many things when we have need of nothing; but when the wind turns, and afflictions overtake us, it is like a tree withered for want of sap, and as a ditch without any water to refresh us. When the sun of our prosperity is hid and covered with a cloud, these shadows vanish and disappear. As leaves fall off in autumn, so doth the friendship of creatures fail men when the sap of that maintenance which commanded their company is withdrawn from them. Man in honour doth not abide, Ps. xlix. As the rising sun, coming into our horizon like a giant ready to run his race, appearing to us with a full and glorious countenance, within an hour's space is obscured with mists, or darkened with clouds; and however, if it meet with neither of these, when it arriveth at its noon-day height, it declines, descendeth, setteth, and is buried under us; so the ambitious person sheweth himself to the world as chief favourite at court, with much pomp and pride; by and by his honour is eclipsed by the hate of the people, or frowns of his prince, or envy of his fellow-courtiers; or if not, yet he dieth, and carrieth nothing away, and his glory doth not descend after him. The like is evident of earthly treasures; they are soon gone, though not soon gotten. As a gallant ship, well rigged, trimmed, tackled, manned, with her top and top-gallant, and her well spread sails, putteth out of harbour to the admiration of many spectators; but within a few days is split upon some dangerous rock, or swallowed up of some disastrous tempest, or taken by some ravenous pirate; so are this world's goods on a sudden taken from their owners, or their owners from them.

There is a hole in our strongest bags, and rust in our choicest metal. The apostle calls riches uncertain riches, and honour a fancy, and all the things of this world a fashion, 1 Tim. vi. 17; Acts xxiv.; 1 Cor. vii. 31. We are not certain to keep these birds in our yards whilst we live; for riches make themselves wings and fly away; but we are certain, if they do not leave us, that we shall leave them. 'We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we shall carry nothing out of the world.'

Reader, how unwise is he who neglecteth eternal substance for fading nothings! The Romans are recorded as guilty of much folly, that in their fight with Mithridates, they were so eager after their prey, that thereby they missed taking the king, who could not otherwise have escaped their hands. Ah, how foolish art thou, if, through thy violent pursuit of a perishing world, thou shouldst

lose an eternal kingdom! As Constantinople was lost through the covetousness of the citizens; so is the crown of life and glory, the city that hath a foundation, through men's eager endeavours after earthly things. The beloved disciple doth not unfitly represent all the beauties, and glories, and excellencies of this lower world, under the name and notion of the moon, which is ever in changes, and never looks upon us twice with the same face; and when it is at the fullest, is blemished with a dark spot, and next door to declining, Rev. xii. 1.

An old man of Brazil, discoursing with the merchants of France and Portugal, and perceiving the long and dangerous voyages which they took to get riches, asked them if men did not die with them as well as in other countries? They told him, Yea. He asked them who should possess their riches after their deaths? They said their children, if they had any; if not, their next kindred. Now, saith the old man, I perceive ye are fools; for what necessity is there for you to pass the troublesome seas wherein so many perish, and to run so many hazards? Is not the earth that brought you up, sufficient to bring up your children and kindred also? We have children and kindred that are likewise dear to us; but when we consider that the earth which nourisheth us is sufficient to nourish them, we rest satisfied.

That busy bee and great trouble-world, Alexander, had a tart yet wise reproof from Diogenes, when, being taken with the philosopher's witty answers, he bade him ask what he would, and he would give it him. The philosopher desired him to grant him the smallest portion of immortality. Alexander said, That is not in my power to give. Then, saith the philosopher, why doth Alexander take such pains, and make such stir to conquer the world, when he cannot assure himself of one moment to enjoy it! Ah! why should thou neglect thy God and Christ, and soul and eternal good, and tire and weary thyself night and day, for these unsatisfying comforts, which may leave thee to-morrow, and of which thou canst not secure the enjoyment of one moment! If God complain of wicked men, and threatens them with fierce wrath and fiery indignation for selling the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes, and would make them know that he valued his people at a higher price, and would not suffer them to be sold at such a rate; what will become of thee if thou shouldst sell thy soul, thy salvation, thy God, thy Christ, for silver, for vain, unsatisfying corruptible silver, when their value is above millions of worlds! Oh take heed that thou dost not cast away thyself for

such transitory trifles. Let not the world's venison cause thee to lose thy Father's blessing. It was a poor change of Glaucus to exchange gold for copper; but oh what a sad exchange wilt thou make to exchange heaven for earth, the endless fruition of the blessed God for a moment's enjoyment of creatures!

Thou wouldst condemn that mariner of folly, who, seeing a fish in the water, should leap into the sea to catch it, which, together with his life, he loseth. What a fool art thou, for mortal comforts to lose an immortal crown! The women of Corinth, saith an ancient father, did set up tapers at the birth of every child, with proper names upon each of them, and that taper which lasted longest in burning, had its proper name transferred to the child. God himself gives the highest and richest, though conceited worldling, his name: 'Thou fool, this night,' &c. 'Nabal is his name, and folly is with him.'

The plain truth is, the world is the ruin and destruction of men. Its pleasures and honours make the sinner merry and jolly, as the herb sardonia the eater, who eating dieth: 'They that will be rich, fall into temptations and snares, and many hurtful lusts, which drown men in perdition,' 1 Tim. vi. 9. The world serveth its darlings as that tyrannous emperor did his servants—let them through a sliding floor into a chamber full of roses, that, being smothered in them, they might meet the bitterness of death in sweetness. Oh do not spend thy strength for that which is not bread, but hearken to Christ, and thou shalt eat that which is good, and thy soul shall delight thyself in fatness, Isa. lv. 3, 4.

Secondly, Consider the brevity of thy life. He who hath but a little time, and a great task, must work hard, or his work will not be done. The birds know their time, and improve it. In some countries, the shorter the days are, the faster they fly. Heathen have been sensible of this. Theophrastus cried out on his dying bed, *Ars longa, vita brevis;* Time was short, and not sufficient for human arts and sciences. Seneca saith of himself, *Nullus mihi per otium exiit dies, partem noctis studiis devovi;* I lose no day through idleness, but even devote part of the night to my studies. The very devils follow their cursed trade with the greater diligence, knowing that their time is short, Rev. xii. 12.

Now, reader, consider how few thy days are. What is your life? even a vapour, a coming and a going, a flood and an ebb, and then thou art in the ocean of eternity. I have read of one, that being asked what life was, was answered answerless; for the party of whom the question was demanded only turned his back and went

away. We come into the world, and take a turn or two about in it, and God saith, Return, ye children of men. A little child may number the days of the oldest man. We project high things, and lay foundations for an earthly eternity, but the longest life is less than a drop to that ocean. Yet, alas! the most are blown off in the spring, and few continue to fall off in autumn. Plutarch compareth Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, in regard of their short reign, to kings in tragedies, which last no longer than the time in which they are represented on the stage.

The river Hypanis in Scythia, bringeth forth every day little bladders, out of which come certain flies, which are bred in the morning, fledged at noon, and die at night: 'Man cometh up like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth as a shadow, and continueth not,' Job xiv. 2.

This short time posteth away with speed; how soon do our days vanish! Job tells us that his little time made great haste to be gone: 'My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle,' Job vii. 6. The weaver's shuttle is an instrument of very swift motion, and so swift that it is used for a proverb, for all things that are swift and speedy. *Radius textoris dictum proverbiale; Radio velocius.* The Latins express it by a beam of the sun, or a word which signifieth a ray, which is darted in a moment from one end of the heavens to another; such speed doth our life make to pass away.

Cardinal Bellarmine, when he had a full prospect of the sun going down, to perceive the quickness of its motion, took a psalter in his hand, and before he had twice read over the fifty-first Psalm, the whole body of the sun was set, whereby he concluded, the earth being twenty-one thousand miles in compass, the sun must go seven thousand miles in half a quarter of an hour. However the Cardinal might be mistaken in his reckoning, yet man's days are 'swifter than a post: they flee away, they see no good. They are passed away as the swift ships; as the eagle that hasteth to the prey,' Job ix. 25, 26. It is our shame and misery that our days should be so swift, and we so slack; that our time should be as speedy as a post, or ship, or eagle, and our hearts as slow about our eternal concernments as a snail. Our negligence herein speaks us brutish, and void of common sense. Reason will teach him that followeth its directions, to be most industrious about matters of such importance.

The heathen historian[1] can agree with Scripture in this: *Vita nostra sicut fabula, non refert quam diu sed quam bene;* Our life

[1] Liv. lib. xv. cap. 7.

passeth away, as a tale that is told; it matters not much whether it be long or short, but whether it be well or ill.

Surely it concerneth thee, reader, to make religion thy business, and work the work of God, when thine everlasting happiness dependeth on it, and thy time is so short that thou hast to do it in. In the days of Ptolomeus Philopater, when the huge and great anchor of the ship Thalmegos was laid out upon the shore, the children of Alexandria did ride upon the stalk, and crept through the ring of the anchor, as if it had been made purposely for their pastime, whereas wise men knew it was appointed for better uses, namely, to stable and make sure the great vessel in storms and tempests.

Truly, so do too many serve time; they play, and toy, and trifle it away, as if God had given it to them for that end; when he who hath but half an eye, as we say, may see that it was given for better purposes, viz., to furnish his soul for his eternal voyage, and thereby to help to stablish and fasten him when he shall launch into the stormy ocean. Protogenes made himself ridiculous in the judgment of all that are sober, for spending seven years in drawing Falisus and his dog; for though the most excellent pictures are longest in drawing, yet to spend years about that which may be finished in days, argueth want of wisdom. But having spoken somewhat largely to this in the sixth chapter, I am the more brief in this.

Thirdly, Consider the examples of others, who have wrought hard at this heavenly calling. Cicero tells us, Nothing prevails more with men than similitudes and examples. Indeed, worthy patterns are of great power. Thucydides brake forth into tears, out of love to learning, upon hearing Herodotus read a history that he had written. Themistocles tells us, the statue of Miltiades would not suffer him to sleep. Alexander was much provoked to valiant acts by reading the prowess of Achilles and Hector in Homer. Cæsar was so stirred to courage by reading the conquests of Alexander in his youth, that he wept for anger that he had done nothing worthy of himself at that age. Iron put into the fire is turned into fire. Consider, therefore, the prophets and apostles of the Lord, how diligent they were at their duty, how hard they wrought for God.

The great apostle was indefatigably industrious for his soul and his Saviour. Consider him in reference to his outward man, how unwearied was he at his Master's work! and in reference to his inward man, how zealous, how fervent in spirit, serving the Lord!

'From Jerusalem to Illyricum I have preached the gospel.' His travels are computed to be twelve thousand nine hundred and seventy miles. He gives us, when necessitated thereunto, a brief catalogue of his actions and passions for Christ. 'Are they ministers of Christ? I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews, five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils by false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things which are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?' 2 Cor. xi. 23-29.

Reader, think thou hearest the apostle speaking to thee, as once to the Corinthians, 'Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ.' How did our blessed Saviour work the work of him that sent him while it was day? He went about doing good. Godliness was his meat and drink: 'I have meat to eat which ye know not of. My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.' He wrought so hard that he forgot to eat his bread, and was taken by his kindred to be mad. It was his sleep and rest. He went into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. He prayed with strong cries and groans; and being in an agony, he prayed the more fervently. He was taken to be about fifty years old when he was little above thirty, so much was he worn out with labour for his God, Acts x. 38; John iv. 34; Luke vi. 12; Mark i. 34; Heb. v. 7.

O reader, let Christ be the copy after which thou wilt write, and the pattern which thou wilt follow, and be a follower of others as they are of Christ Jesus. Did Christ work so hard for thee; did he lose his food, and sleep, and wear out himself, that his strength was dried up like a potsherd, and his heart was melted like wax in the midst of his bowels, and wilt not thou spend and be spent for thy Saviour?—I would say for thy own soul; for in serving him thou servest thyself. Think of it when thou art trifling away thy time, and neglecting thy spiritual watch, and dull and dead in holy duties. How eager and earnest, how zealous and sedulous, thy Lord Jesus was in working out thy salvation! He did not play,

nor dally about the work of thy redemption, but made it his business, and did what he was called to with all his heart, and soul, and strength.

CHAPTER XV.

The excellency of this calling, and the conclusion of the treatise.

Fourthly, Consider the excellency of this calling. As it is said of God in respect of beings, 'Who is like thee, O God? Among all the gods none is to be compared to thee;' so I may say of godliness in respect of callings, What is like thee, O godliness? Amongst all callings none is comparable to thee.

1. It is the most honourable calling. The master that thou art bound to is King of kings, and Lord of lords, the fountain of honour, and Lord of glory; one of whom the greatest princes and potentates of the world hold their crowns and sceptres, to whom they must kneel and do their homage; one to whom the whole creation is less than nothing. The work that thou art employed in is not servile and mean, but high and noble; the worship of the great God, walking and conversing with his blessed Majesty, subduing brutish lusts, living above this beggarly earth, a conversation in heaven, a conflict with, and conquest over, this dreggy flesh and drossy world, and powers of hell, to which the greatest battles and victories of the most valiant warriors that ever drew the sword are worse than children's play. To conquer our passions is more than to conquer kingdoms. Themistocles is renowned by Cicero for telling some who disparaged him for his ignorance in playing on the lute, that he knew not how to play on the lute, yet he knew how to take a city. To subdue one lust, is more than to subdue a thousand cities. Thy fellow-servants are the elect of God, glorious angels and saints, who are higher than the kings of the earth, princes in all lands, a crown of glory, a royal diadem, a chosen generation, the excellent of the earth, vessels of gold, the children of the Most High, of whom the world is not worthy. The privileges of this calling and company are eminent. Adoption, remission, growth in grace, divine love, perseverance in holiness, an eternal kingdom, are all contained in the charter granted to this corporation. The covenant of grace, that hive of sweetness, that mine of gold, that cabinet of jewels, to which all the world is but a heap of dust, is their part and portion, and contains more in it for their comfort than heaven and earth is able to contain.

To serve God is one of the fairest flowers in the saint's garland of honour. Hence the Lord's kinsman glorieth in being the Lord's servant; and the Lord's mother calleth herself his handmaid, Jude 1; Luke i. 38. If the meanest offices about earthly princes are esteemed honourable, what an honour is it to wait on the King of heaven! The saints' duty is their preferment, and that service which is commanded them a privilege. The great apostle boasteth of his chain for God as his glory and credit, and holdeth it up as a mark and badge of honour: 'For the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain,' Acts xxviii. 20, and begins one of his epistles with this honorary title, 'Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ,' Philem. 1.

It is not earthly riches that make a man honourable; we mistake in calling and counting rich men the best men in the parish. Riches without godliness are but a gold ring in a swine's snout, for which the brute is nothing the better. It is not airy applause or worldly preferments that will make a man honourable. Titles are but like feathers in the hat, or glistering scarfs under the arms, which add not the least worth to the man that wears them. A great letter makes no more to the sense of the world than a small one. Worship, honour, grace, highness, majesty, make nothing to the real intrinsic value of any person. The great monarchs of the world are but beasts in God's account. Antiochus Epiphanes, whose name signifieth illustrious, whom the Samaritans styled the mighty God, is called by the Holy Ghost, because of his ungodliness, a vile person, Dan. xi. 21; 'In his days shall stand up a vile person.' All honour without holiness is fading, as well as fancied rather than real. External nobility, though it glitter in the face of the world, is but, as Seneca saith, *vitrea*, brittle as glass, and compounded of earth. The potentates of the world are often like tennis-balls, tossed up on high to fall down low. Hence some of the wiser heathen have called them *ludibria fortunæ*, the scorn of fortune. Haman honoured one day, the next day hanged. Gelimer, the puissant prince of the Vandals, Belisarius, Charles the Fifth, and Henry the Fourth, emperors, and many others, experienced the brittleness of worldly glory. But that honour which is from above is true and eternal. Plutarch tells us the Roman nobles, as a badge of their nobility, wore the picture of the moon upon their shoes, signifying, as their nobility did increase, so it would decrease. All privileges, all prerogatives, all titles, all dignities, without godliness, are vanishing shadows. It is the new creation that rendereth the children of Abraham like the glorious stars in heaven.

The world looks on the saint (possibly he is poor and mean in the world) as the Jews looked on Christ, as a root out of a dry ground, and so saw no form nor comeliness in him; but they who could pierce into the inside of Christ, could see that in him dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and they who can see into the inside of Christians, behold the King's daughter all glorious within. As the precious stone sandastra hath nothing in outward appearance but that which seemeth black, but, being broken, poureth forth beams like the sun, so the church of Christ is outwardly black with affliction, but inwardly more bright and glorious than the sun, with thriving virtues and celestial graces. The power of godliness in a mean Christian is a rich treasure in a mean cabinet, but vice in robes, in scarlet, is poison in wine, the more deadly and dangerous.

Tamerlane's tomb was rifled by the Turks, and his bones worn by them for jewels, though their enemy, and one that had conquered them in divers combats, and captivated their emperor, and carried him up and down in an iron cage for his footstool. God makes his people honourable in the eyes of the wicked: 'Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou art honourable, and I have loved thee; therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. The sons of them that afflicted thee shall bow before thee, and thine enemies shall lick the dust,' Isa. xliii. 4. A wicked king, Jehoram, honoureth and waiteth on a servant of God, Elisha; Herod reverenceth the Baptist. Grace is a powerful, though silent orator, to persuade all that see it to love and honour it. What Diogenes spake of learning is truly applicable to grace, or the knowledge of God in Christ. It makes young men sober, old men happy, poor men rich, and rich men honourable.

When Agesilaus was ready to die, he charged his friends that they should not make any picture or statue of him: For, saith he, if I have done anything that is good, that will be my monument; but if otherwise, all the statues you can make will not keep my name alive. The Egyptians, in their funeral orations, never commended any for his riches, because they thought them the goods of fortune, but for his righteousness and justice.

Piety is a lasting pillar, that causeth the righteous to be had in everlasting remembrance. Time shall not outlive the saint's honour: grace renders him more illustrious than ever the Mausolean mountain did that Carian. As the hairs of Tarandrus are not to be pierced with any weapon, so the name of a saint cannot be hurt by all the slanders and calumnies of the wicked. They

who are sainted in heaven's calendar, and whose names are enrolled in the Lamb's book of life, are truly honourable and eternally glorious, maugre the malice of men and devils. The disgrace which the wicked cast on the righteous is, at worst, but like the noise of some loud-tongued gun, ceased as soon as heard; but the honour which God and Scripture put upon the godly is a pillar which endureth to all eternity; such a monument as neither age, nor time, nor envy, can waste or wear out. Demetrius, under all the obloquy and contempt which his countrymen cast upon him, could comfort himself in this, that though the Athenians demolished his statues, yet they could not extinguish his virtues, the cause of raising them.

Sin is so base and beggarly, so loathsome and shameful a thing, that not only the children of God, but even wicked men, have been unwilling to own it, and ashamed to be taxed with it, or found out at the commission of it; when godliness is so high and honourable, so noble and excellent a mistress, that those who deny the power of it, will take upon them the form of it; they who hate its work, will wear its livery. There are hardly any jewels of grace, but for each of them vice hath counterfeit stones. Oh how noble a mistress, how honourable a lady is that, whom all pretend relation to, and even those that hate her would not be thought her enemies, but blush to be taxed as strangers to her!

2. It is the most comfortable and delightful calling. Satan would represent Christians under ugly vizards, and Christianity frightful, to make men loathe both the one and the other. As he transforms himself, the prince of darkness, and his ways, which are darkness, into an angel of light, and seeming light, so he endeavours to transform Christians, who are children of light, and their holy ways, which are paths of light, into children of darkness and paths of darkness. He endeavours to make men think the power of godliness antipodes to all cheerfulness; but holiness is far from such a crabbed face and austere countenance as he would have us fancy. No trade hath so much mirth with it and in it; joy is one essential part of this calling: 'The kingdom of God consisteth not in meats and drinks, but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,' Rom. xiv. 17. The servants of God do not only rejoice in the forethoughts of their reward, to think of the time when their indentures shall expire, and they shall enjoy the glorious liberty of the sons of God—'We rejoice in hope of glory;' but also in their work. They are joyful in the house of prayer; they sing at their work, 'Thy statutes are my songs in the house of my pilgrimage;' nay, at the hardest and most tiresome of their work: 'We rejoice in tribula-

tion.' 'My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.' Joy is the beam which is darted from the sun, the stream which floweth from the fountain of godliness. It is observable that the beginning, the least degree of grace, causeth joy, great joy; what, then, will its growth and perfection do? When Christ did but call to Zaccheus, he came down hastily, and received him joyfully, Luke xix. 6. When the eunuch was converted, he went home rejoicing, Acts viii. 39. When the Samaritans had received Christ into their hearts at Philip's preaching, there was great joy in that city, Acts viii. 6–8. The jailer, after his heartquake, rejoiced, believing in God with all his house, Acts xvi. 34. The joy of the saints, as it is invisible, so it is unutterable: 'In whom believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory,' 1 Pet. i. 8. For the measure of it, it is compared to the joy of harvest, to the joy of the bridegroom and bride on their wedding-day, Isa. ix. 3; Hosea ii. 19.

Hence it is that grace and godliness are compared to, and set forth by, those things which are pleasant and delightful, and bring joy with them: as music, the joy and delight of the ears; a feast, the joy and delight of the taste; to light, the joy and delight of the eyes; life, wine, which rejoiceth the heart; perfumes, which delight the scent; good, the joy of the will; truth, the joy of the understanding. Godliness hath joy proper and suitable for every sense, whether outward or inward. As the higher the sun is, the greater its light is, so the holier the Christian, the greater his joy is. The more clear the fire burns, the more comfortable it is; smoke fetcheth tears from our eyes. When grace burns clear, it is refreshing indeed; it is the smoke of sin that turns our houses into *bochims*, places of weeping. When good men step awry, not pondering their goings, then they wrench their feet, or put their bones out of joint, and so put themselves to much pain.

Indeed, wicked men who are ignorant of the mystery of godliness, because they see no sunshine in the faces of godly men, judge it to be foul weather in their hearts. As the Roman soldiers, when they entered into the *Sanctum sanctorum* and saw no images, presently reported the Jews to worship the clouds; but a Christian's joy is as far out of wicked men's sight to discern it, as out of their power to remove it. A stranger intermeddleth not with his joy: 'Your hearts shall rejoice, and your joy shall no man take from you.' A wicked man's joy is most in his face. As a blackamore, he is white nowhere but in his teeth. Seneca compares him to a commander in a desperate battle, who, lest his soldiers should run away, sets a good

face on it, when he is inwardly terrified and full of fear. He is like one in a high desperate fever, having a good colour, when his heart is heavy, and he is at the gate of death. The godly man's joy is most in his heart: he is like that fish which hath a rough outside but a pearl within. When there are storms without, there is music within—peace of conscience, which passeth all understanding. A wicked man is as a book of tragedies, bound extraordinary, gay and gilt on the outside, but full of doleful, dreadful stories within; or, as Alexander said of Antipater, he was white without, but purple within; his face may be white and smiling, but his conscience is red and fiery. But the godly man's inside is his best side; though his full sacks of joy and delight are not opened till he comes to his Father's house, yet the blessed Jesus gives him, as Joseph the patriarchs, sufficient provision for the way. The law gave the first fruits of the earth to God; the gospel gives the first fruits of heaven to men, which are both an earnest and a taste of their glorious and everlasting harvest.

All sorrows proceed from sin. As the shadow followeth the body, so doth grief follow guilt. Lust, like rotten flesh or wood, will breed worms to gnaw in the sinner's bowels. Therefore it is no wonder that Nabal, Saul, and Belshazzar, when their lusts flew in their faces, died, or were ready to die, with horror. If a godly man sin wilfully, and wound his soul, it is no wonder if he feel the smart and pain of it. When David steps awry, and slips with his feet, and falls dangerously, he may well keep his bed, and water his couch, and cry out of his aches and broken bones; yet the very sorrow of a saint for sin against his God, hath more real joy and delight in it than all the skin-deep pleasures of giggling gallants. Crates could dance and laugh in his threadbare coat, and his wallet at his back, which was all his wealth. The saint can rejoice in his saddest afflictions; though he seldom live in palaces, yet he always lives in a paradise, having, if he be careful to keep a good conscience, a constant youth of joy and perpetual spring, as that place they write of under the equator. The tears of those that pray, saith Augustine, are sweeter than the joys of the theatre.

It is true, godliness doth abridge men of sinful pleasures, but it is the more pleasant for separating itself from that which is worse than poison. Agesilaus could taste by a natural appetite that such pleasures are more fit for slaves than freemen. Averroes and the rest of the Arabian philosophers are ashamed of that sensual and beastly paradise which their Mohammed provided for them, as most unworthy the soul of man, and infinitely short of true delight.

Godliness doth not deny us our natural delights, only rectify and regulate them, lest we should surfeit on them. It doth not deny us drink, but drunkenness: nor meat, but gluttony. Nature, even in things in themselves lawful, would run out unlawfully if she were not restrained. Grace only keepeth the reins in its own hands, lest that skittish colt should, through its wantonness, break its own neck. It is as the pale to the garden, to preserve the flowers in it from beasts, or as a hedge to a field, to keep what is in it within bounds. As Leonidas the captain, perceiving that his soldiers left their watch on the city walls for the ale-houses, commanded that the ale-houses should be removed to the city walls, that they might both enjoy their pleasure and discharge their duties together. Godliness alloweth men the comfort of their relations and possessions, only it so limiteth our delight in them, that we may not by them be hindered from working the work of God, and minding our eternal salvations.

Godliness brings more noble and excellent pleasures. Others are puddle-water; those pleasures which godliness giveth are pure and clear streams, such as flow from God himself. There is more sweetness in one drop of the fountain, than in all the waters of the sea. There is more joy, more comfort, in a little communion with God, than in the greatest confluence of creature enjoyments. Augustine saith,[1] How sweet was it to me on a sudden to be without these sweet vanities! thou, Lord, who art the true sweetness, didst take them from me and enter in thyself, who art more pleasant than all pleasure, and more clear than all light. The world, as they say of fairies, deprives of true children, and puts changelings in their room; deprives men of true substantial joy, and gives them shadows in the room; but godliness, on the contrary, deprives of painted poisons, and gives them wholesome and real pleasures. All the comforts of this world, to a person void of grace, are but as a sack of perfumes and medicines, and cordial drugs to the back of a galled horse, which may vex and enrage his sores with their weight, but do not ease or abate his pain with their virtue. A saint's life, notwithstanding his greatest sufferings, whilst it is blessed with the smiles of his Father, is a heaven upon earth; but the sinner's life, notwithstanding his honours, and pleasures, and riches, and relations, whilst under the wrath of an infinite God, and anguished with the gripings of a guilty conscience, is little less than an earnest and taste of hell. Grace is sugar to sweeten all our crosses, and sin is vinegar to sour all our comforts. The iron seems to

[1] Conf., lib. ix. cap. 1.

embrace the loadstone with great delight, and to be rapt with an amorous ecstasy; so as Thales thought it animal. And yet that motion is void of the least sense of pleasure. The wicked man seems, by his smiling face and giggling countenance, to be the only merry man, when he is as far from true pleasure as from true piety. The least bee finds more delight in making and tasting a little honey, than the great sun and all his glorious attendants in their high and perpetual courses. The meanest Christian hath more comfort in making sure his salvation, and tasting the sweetness of his Saviour, than the kings of the earth and their courtiers in their abundance of all earthly comforts.

The wise man tells us concerning the ways of wisdom, wherein a Christian's daily walk is, 'Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace,' Prov. iii. 17; and the saints find them so by experience. The word of God, which is the rule of their work, is sweeter to them than the honey and the honeycomb, and they delight to do the will of God. The sinner's life is an uncomfortable life; besides those inward gripes and horror which sin causeth in the conscience at present, and its end, the sting in the tail, which is the eternal fire, there is trouble, and fear, and shame, and vexation in the very act or commission of many sins. To forgive an injury, which is one piece of Christianity, is pleasant and delightful; but to revenge an affront, what heats and colds, what passions and perturbations, doth it cause! To love our neighbours, and wish their welfare, is a sweet thing, a reward in itself—it hath meat in its mouth; but to envy my neighbour, because he is richer or more honourable, or hath larger gifts and more friends than myself, is as rottenness to the bones; it wasteth and consumeth the inward parts, as rust eateth out iron, according to Solomon's phrases. A contented man hath a heaven upon earth; all the year with him is spring-time or summer; like a child, he takes no carking care for food, or raiment, or house-rent, but minds his duty, and leaves all to his Father, who knoweth what he hath need of. But the covetous, who, like the barren womb, hath never enough, pines with fear of want, and can neither eat, nor drink, nor sleep quietly, lest he should lose what he hath, or not have sufficient to hold out; nay, he will not allow himself convenient food or raiment, though he have never so much; but, like a beast, feeds on thistles, when he hath all sorts of provision upon his back. Temperance hath health and strength with it, and thereby renders the other comforts of this life savoury and comfortable; so also chastity. But gluttony, and drunkenness, and whoredom bring

weakness and sickness on men's bodies, and embitter all other blessings, besides the fear of being discovered, to the shame and disgrace of the authors, which tormenteth not a little. There is comfort in dealing honestly and righteously; but if a man will cheat, and cozen, and filch, and steal, no wonder if he tire his head with plots and projects to carry it on cunningly and secretly, and terrify his heart with apprehension that it will be known, and then he shall be branded for a knave, or suffer the penalty of law in a more severe degree.

The sinner is hurried hither and thither by his opposite lords and contrary lusts, and torn piecemeal by them, as a man by beasts, which draw the parts of his body contrary ways. The commands of sin are harsh and heavy; no tyrant ever put his subjects upon more crabbed, painful work; but the commandments of God are not grievous, 1 John v. 3. Sin is slavery, and its servant worse than those that row in Turkish galleys; but God's law is a law of liberty, and they walk at liberty who seek his precepts. The ways of sinners are called crooked ways, rugged ways, which are unpleasant to travel in; but the ways of God are called straight ways, plain paths, which are delightful to passengers. I am confident the true Christian hath more true pleasure in suffering for Christ, or one act of mortification, or victory over one lust, than the highest earthly potentate hath in his largest dominions, in the multitude of his subjects, in the richness of his kingdoms, and in all the honour that is done him, or good things enjoyed by him all his days.

3. It is the most profitable calling. Reader, this argument is *Achilleum*, or *instar omnium*, the strongest argument, and instead of all; with most men gain is the great god of this world, that commandeth all their heads, and hearts, and hands, to whom they bow down the knees both of their bodies and souls. The thief and murderer are quickened by this to their hellish trade: 'Come, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause. We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil,' Prov. i. 11, 13. The Shechemites, upon this ground, will endure the pain of circumcision, and throw up their former religion: 'Shall not their beasts, and their cattle, and their substance be ours?' The soul for this will scale the walls, and leap upon the pikes, and run upon the mouth of the cannon. The husbandman for this will rise early, go to bed late, eat the bread of carefulness, toil and moil all day, and make a drudge, a slave, a pack-horse of himself all the year. The merchant for this will plough the ocean, dance upon the surging billows, suffer many dangers and deaths through his

whole voyage. The shopkeeper for this will crowd into any hole of the city, break his sleep, waste his health, run about hither and thither, early and late. Gehazi, Achan, Judas, Balaam, for this will venture their bodies, their souls, any things, all things. Profit is such a bait that all will bite at. The devil, that arch-politician, who hath had so many thousand years' experience, besides his extraordinary natural knowledge, could not judge any topics more likely than this to take with our blessed Saviour: 'All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.' The gods themselves were said by the Athenians to be corrupted with Philip's gold, that their oracles still were in favour of him. Money is the absolute monarch, which can put men upon the most dangerous designs. Therefore Cassius, surnamed the Severe, one of the wisest of the Roman judges, in all doubtful causes that came before him, would demand, *Cui bono*, Who gained, or had the profit? well knowing that that is the bias which turneth men aside to wrong others; and the heady, wanton horse, which breaks through the fence to trespass upon neighbours.

Now, reader, if profit will prevail with thee, godliness with contentment is great gain. All the gold of the world is dross, all the diamonds of the world are dirt, all the gains of the world are loss, to this gain of godliness. Egypt watered by Nilus hath four rich harvests, say some, in less than four months. Solinus saith the Egyptian fig-tree beareth fruit seven times in a year. Godliness brings forth thirty, sixty, a hundredfold increase; it giveth a hundredfold in this world, and in the world to come life everlasting, Mat. xix. 29. 'After ye had your fruits unto holiness, in the end everlasting life,' Rom. vi. 22. Did the sinner but believe Scripture, that speaks the infinite reward of holiness, he would quickly set up this trade. Pindar the poet saith, in regard of the fertility of Rhodia, and the wealth of the inhabitants, that it rained gold in that country. 'The fruit of wisdom is better than silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all thou canst desire is not to be compared to her,' Prov. iii. 14, 15.

Lucian fancieth all the heathen gods and goddesses sitting in parliament, and each making choice of that tree which best pleased them. Jupiter chose the oak for its strength; Apollo, the bay-tree for its greenness; Neptune chose the poplar for its length; Juno chose the eglantine for its sweetness; Venus chose the myrtle-tree for its beauty; Minerva, sitting by, demanded of her father Jupiter, why, since there were so many fruitful trees, they all had

chosen barren ones. He answered, *Ne videantur fructu honorem vendere*, Lest they should seem to sell honour for fruit. Minerva replied, Well, do what you please; I for my part make choice of the olive, for its fatness and fruitfulness. They all commended her choice, and were ashamed of their own folly. This fiction doth fitly represent the foolishness of men at this day, in choosing the honours, and preferments, and glory of the world, which are barren and unfruitful things, of no worth in the other world, before that honour which is from God, and the eternal weight of glory, and also the convictions of their consciences another day, which will force them to be ashamed of their own folly; and to commend the choice of a Christian for preferring grace and godliness, which will stand him in stead in an hour of death and day of judgment, and bring him in unspeakable gain, before the airy honours and withering vanities of this life.

Reader, if thou wilt give conscience free liberty to speak its mind, I know it will tell thee that no calling is comparable to this for profit.

The gain of godliness is real gain, rich gain, certain gain, eternal gain.

1. It is real, if the word of truth may be trusted; its fruit is therefore called substance, in distinction from earthly riches, which are shadows: 'I will cause them that love me to inherit substance.'

2. It is called also true riches; other riches are feigned. Hence also godly men are said to be rich towards God, and other men to be rich in this world. It is rich gain, as it hath relation to the best part; it makes the soul of man truly precious, as it is most serviceable to our last end, and prepareth man for the fruition of God, and also as its reward is unconceivable. The vessels of mercy shall swim in an ocean of glory: 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor can the heart of man conceive what God hath laid up for them that love him,' 1 Cor. ii. 9. Its reward is beyond all expression, above all apprehensions; no comparison can fully resemble it, no understanding conceive it.

3. It is eternal gain. Other gains are fading, deceitful brooks, dying flowers, withering gourds, and vanishing shadows: 'Riches are not for ever,' Prov. xxix.; 'Man in honour abideth not,' Ps. xlix. 12; 'The pleasures of sin are but for a season,' Heb. xi. 25; but this gain is for ever. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever, both in the nature of it, it is incorruptible seed, and in the fruit of it, which is the gift of God, eternal life. Though other

trades shall all fail, as useful only in this needy world; though other callings shall vanish, and time itself shall be no more, yet this trade, this calling, shall run parallel with the life of an immortal soul. Though gold be a corruptible metal, the gain of this calling is better than much fine gold; it is an inheritance, undefiled, incorruptible. Our work, whether in doing or suffering the will of God, is but for a moment; but it works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Oh what a happy good, what an excellent gain, is that which is eternal! Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall never be taken from her. When thy lands and houses shall be taken from thee, thy place and dwelling shall know thee no more; when thy friends and relations shall be taken from thee—'Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke;' when all the comforts of this life shall serve thee as vermin and lice do a dead man, though they stick close to him in his life, run from him at death; this calling will stand by thee, encourage thee, never leave thee nor forsake thee. In other things thou choosest for that which is most lasting. If thou buyest a house, or beast, or suit of apparel, thou art desirous to have that which is most durable and strong. Oh, why shouldst thou not choose that good which is everlasting! When Demetrius had taken Megara, and his soldiers plundered the city, he, fearing the philosopher Stilpo might receive some loss, sent for him, and asked him whether any of his men had taken anything of his. Stilpo answered, No; for I saw no man that took my learning from me. Godliness is such wealth, such learning, as will abide with thee in general plunder; indeed, neither men nor devils can rob thee of it.

4. It is certain gain. He that sets up of this trade may be trusted, for none ever brake of this calling. God himself, whose is the earth and the fulness thereof, is bound for them, and hath undertaken for their preservance, and growth, and gains. The merchant that trades into the other world, is not properly a merchant venturer; for the gospel, which is the insurance office, hath engaged infinite power, and love, and faithfulness for the security and safe return of all the vessels which he sends forth. The promises are all yea and amen, the sure mercies of David; the covenant of grace, which containeth all their gains and riches, is stable in all things, and sure, 2 Cor. i. 20; Isa. lv. 6; 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

If there were a free trade proclaimed to the Indies, and every man that went promised as much gold as he would desire, and a certainty of making a good voyage, who almost would stay at

home? What crowding would there be to port towns, and what haste to take shipping.

Reader, though God will not suffer this to be in reference to earthly treasures, knowing out of his infinite wisdom how hurtful they would be to immortal souls, yet he offereth thee all this, and infinitely more, in calling upon thee to mind godliness. He saith to thee, as Joseph to his brethren, Gen. xlv. 18, 'Come unto me, and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land.' Come unto me, and I will give you the good of Canaan, and ye shall eat the pleasant fruits of that land flowing with milk and honey.

O reader, didst thou know the worth of this jewel, thou wouldst trample upon all the wealth of this world as dung in comparison of it. Little dost thou think or imagine the advantage, the virtues, of this diamond. It is the true loadstone that draweth all good to it. Luther saith of one psalm: This psalm hath done more for me than all the potentates of the world. I may say to thee, This calling will feed thee with bread that came down from heaven, and clothe thee with fine linen, the robes of God's own righteousness; it will protect thee and maintain thee, it will advance and honour thee, it will enrich and ennoble thee in life, refresh and rejoice thee in death, crown and reward thee after death, do more for thee than all the princes or potentates, relations or possessions, persons or comforts upon earth can do.

In thy prosperity and enjoyment of outward good things, godliness would, like sugar and spice, correct their windiness, and make them wholesome and profitable to thee. It would, like Elisha's meal and salt, make thy meat sweet and savoury, and thy drink pleasant and refreshing to thee. It would make thy bed soft and easy, thy garments warm and sweet-scented. It will so far abate thy appetite to this luscious food, that thou shouldst not feed immoderately, to the surfeiting thy soul.

As the fiery bush which Moses saw in the mount Horeb, though it was in a flaming fire, did not consume; or as the shining worm, that, being cast into the fire, doth not waste, but is thereby purged from its filth, and made more beautiful than all the water in the world could make it; so affliction should not ruin, but reform and purify thee. In the greatest danger this will be thy defence. Though others, like the old world, are drowned, are destroyed in these waters, yet thou shouldst ride safely in a well-pitched ark; and to free thee from any fear of miscarrying, the Lord himself would shut thee in. When others are in the open air, on whom

storms and tempests have their full force, thou shouldst be housed in God's presence-chamber, and kept secret by his side. As Gideon's fleece, thou shouldst be dry, when all about thee are wet. The whale of destruction might digest thousands of mariners, but one godly Jonah is too hard for him. The torrent of fire that ran from Ætna, and consumed the country, yet parted itself to safeguard them that relieved their aged parents. When the Grecians had taken Troy, and given every man liberty to carry out his burden, they were so taken with the devotion of Æneas in carrying out first his household gods, and, upon a second license, his old father Anchises and his son Ascanius, instead of treasures, which others carried out, that they permitted him to carry what he would without any disturbance.[1] Jeremiah, in the Babylonish captivity, was tendered and regarded highly by the king of Babylon. When Sodom was destroyed, Lot was preserved. It was storied of Troy, that so long as the image of Pallas stood safe in it, that city should never be won. It is true of godliness, so long as the fear and love of thy God are within thee, so long as thou makest religion thy business, nothing shall hurt thee, everything shall help thee. Godliness will bring in all gain, and at all times: 'No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.' A child of God, by adoption, is in some sense like the Son of God by eternal generation, heir of all things: 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23, 'Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours: and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.' Nay, the Christian's riches are not only unsearchable, Eph. iii. 8, but also durable, Prov. viii. 15. When a wicked man dieth, all his riches die with him. His treasure is laid up on earth, therefore, when he leaves the earth, he leaves his treasure, Ps. xlix. 17. When a godly man dieth, his riches follow him, Rev. xiv. 13. His treasure is in heaven, and so when he dieth he goeth to his gains.

O reader, what an argument is here to provoke thee to piety. Godliness is profitable in all conditions, in all relations, in both worlds. In prosperity, it will be a sun to direct thee; in adversity, a shield to protect thee; in life, it will be thy comfort, and, which is infinitely more, in death, that hour of need, it will be thy enlivening cordial. The smell of trefoil is stronger in a cloudy, dark season, than in fair weather. The refreshing savour of the sweet spices of grace is strongest in the saints' greatest necessities.

When death, the king of terrors, comes to enter the list, and fight with thee for thy soul and eternal salvation, for thy God, and

[1] Dares Phryg. de bello Trojano.

Christ, and heaven, and happiness; when all thy riches, and honours, and friends, and relations would leave thee in the lurch, to shift for thyself, as dogs leave their master when he comes to the water, godliness would be thy shield, to secure thee against its shot, and make thee more than a conqueror over it. Thou mightst call thy dying bed, as Jacob the place through which he travelled, Mahanaim, a camp, for there angels would meet thee, to convey thee safe through the air, the enemy's country, of which Satan is lord and prince, to thy Father's house, where thou shouldst be infinitely blessed in the vision and fruition of thy God and Saviour for ever. Godliness would be the pilot to steer the vessel of thy soul aright through those boisterous waters to a happy port. The Arabic fable mentions one that carried a hog, a goat, and a sheep to the city; the hog roared hideously, when the other two were still and quiet; and being asked the reason, gave this account of her crying: The sheep and goat have no such cause to complain, for they are carried to the city for their milk, but I am carried thither to be killed, being good for nothing else. The ungodly person may well cry out sadly when sickness comes, for then guilt flieth in his face, and conscience tells him death will kill him; he is good for nothing but to be killed with death, Rev. xi. 5; he never honoured God in this world, and God will force honour out of him in the other world. He may well screech out dreadfully at the approach of death, whose body death sends to the grave, and his soul to intolerable and unquenchable flames; but the godly man may bid death welcome, knowing it will be his exceeding gain and advantage.

Reader, when others, like the Israelites, are afraid, and start back at the sight of this Goliath, thou mightst, like little David, encounter him in the name of the Lord, and overcome him. Thou mightst triumphantly sing in the ears of death, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' The Lord of life would sweeten death to thee, and subdue it for thee; nay, make it at peace with thee, that thou mightst say to death, as Jacob to Esau, 'I have seen thy face, as if it had been the face of God,' who hath made thee to meet me with smiles instead of frowns. Death would help thee to that sight, to that knowledge, to that state and degree of holiness for which thou hast prayed, and wept, and fasted, and watched, and laboured, and waited many a day; as it is said of Job, there was none like him in the earth, so I may say of this calling, there is none like it upon the face of the earth, the very enemies of it, in their hours of extremity, being judges. Ah, who

would not work for God with the greatest diligence, and walk with God in the exactest obedience, and wait upon God with the greatest patience, when he is assured that, in the doing of his commands, there is such great reward; and those that 'sow to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.'

THE CONCLUSION.

Reader, I have now ended this treatise; but whether thou, if a stranger to this calling, wilt put an end to thy carnal, fleshly ways, and begin this high and heavenly work or no, I know not. If thou art ambitious, thou hast here encouragement sufficient; godliness will ennoble thee, and render thy blood not only honourable, but royal. If thou art voluptuous, here is a bait which may take thee; godliness will bring thee to a river of pleasures, to such dainties and delights as take the hearts of perfect and glorious angels. If thou art covetous, here is a golden weight to turn the scales of thy desires and endeavours: 'Godliness is profitable unto all things;' it hath the promise of this life, and of that which is to come. When thy house, and lands, and honours, and neighbours, and wife, and children, and flesh, and heart fail thee, and forsake thee, godliness would say to thee, and stand to it also, as Peter to Christ, 'Though all forsake thee, yet will not I.' When the world's trinity—credit, profit, and pleasure—serve their lovers and worshippers as rats and mice do a house, leave it when it is on fire, fly from them in their need and extremity, godliness would stick to thee as close, as fast as Ruth to Naomi; where thou goest it would go, where thou lodgest it would lodge; nay, it would follow thee into the other world, and abide with thee, a cordial, a comfort for ever; it would give thee cause to say to it, as she to her daughter-in-law, 'Thou hast shewed more kindness to me at the latter end than at the beginning.'

What canst thou have to object against godliness, that sets thee at such a distance from it? Wilt thou believe a lying world, a deceitful flesh, a destroying devil, or the God of truth? Who is thy greatest enemy, God or they? Who will do thee most good, God or they? If thou wilt be tried by the confessions of the greatest enemies that godliness hath, even they, in their hours of extremity, will tell thee grace is of infinite worth; godliness is the best of all. Ah, how happy had we been at this hour, had we been as faithful servants to religion as we have been slaves to foolish lusts and pleasures!

If reason may be heard, thou will not defer one moment the entering thy name in this society, and binding thyself apprentice to thy Saviour; thou mayst see plainly that it is thine interest as well as thy duty; and all thy happiness for this and the other world dependeth on it. If Scripture may be heard, thou wilt quickly set about thy general calling, and make religion thy business; it calleth loudly to thee to turn thy back upon earth, and face about for heaven; to forsake the flesh, before the flesh forsake thee. It telleth thee plainly, under the hand of thy Maker, that if thou livest after the flesh, and sowest to the flesh, thou shalt die eternally. If the conscience within thee may be heard, thou wilt presently give a bill of divorce to thy carnal, brutish delights, and strike a hearty covenant with Jesus Christ; it often warneth thee of thy duty and danger, and terrifieth thee with the forethoughts of that fire and fury which thou art hastening to feel. If thy friends and relations, who have any sense of a jealous God, and eternal estate, may be heard, then thou wilt immediately hearken to the counsel I commend to thee from God, and exercise thyself unto godliness. They advise, and persuade, and entreat thee to turn over a new leaf, and lead a new life, and to mind in thy day the things of thy peace. If the God upon whom thou livest, by whom thou movest, from whom thou hast thy being, may be heard, thou wilt now wink on the world, crucify the flesh, loathe thyself for thy filth and folly, and devote thy heart and soul to his fear. He commandeth thee by his dominion over thee, and thy obligations to him; he threateneth, promiseth, affrighteth, allureth, and all to make thee mind thy allegiance to him, and the work he hath given thee to do in this world. If thy Saviour, who humbled himself for thy sake, and took upon him the form of a servant, and in thy nature was buffeted, scourged, and crucified, may be heard, then thou wilt immediately take the counsel that is given thee, and turn to the Lord with all thy heart, and loathe thyself for all thine abominations. He pleads with thee most pathetically, presenteth to thee the stripes and wounds which sin caused in his blessed body; the blood which he shed, the ignominy he endured, the agony, the death he suffered, and all to satisfy for sin, to make himself Lord both of the dead and living. He tells thee he gave himself for thee, to redeem thee from all iniquity, and to purify thee to himself a peculiar child zealous of good works. If the daily, and nightly, and hourly mercies that thou enjoyest; if the sickness, or pain, or loss, or disgrace, or afflictions which sometimes thou sufferest, may be heard, there would not be so much

ado to persuade a wretched creature to be blessed, and an ungodly person to be holy and happy. If the inanimate and irrational creatures, the earth beneath thee, the heavens above thee, the beasts and birds about thee, might be heard, thou wouldst, whilst it is called to-day, now, after so long a time, attend to the call and command of him, in whose hand is thy life and breath, and follow after holiness, without which thou shalt never see the Lord. Shall a centurion's servant go, when he bids him go, and come, when he bids him come; and wilt thou not go and come at the voice of God? Did Balaam's ass speak at God's command, and reprove the madness of the prophet? Did ravens at God's command feed Elijah? Did caterpillars, and locusts, and frogs, and lice, execute God's judgments upon Pharaoh? Do fire, and hail, and snow, and vapours, and stormy winds fulfil his word? Doth the earth open, the rocks rend, the stars fight in their courses, waters stand up in heaps as a wall, the moon stand still, the sun go backward, wildernesses tremble, things cross the course of nature to obey his pleasure, and wilt not thou obey him? O man, bethink thyself! wilt thou be worse than these irrational and inanimate creatures? are not thy engagements to God infinitely above theirs? What wilt thou have to say for thyself, when every stone in the street, as well as star in the heavens, when every bird, and beast, and fowl, will condemn thee? Oh where wilt thou appear?

I must tell thee that a perilous time, a day of extremity, an hour of trouble and anguish, is hastening upon thee, which thou canst no more escape or avoid, than thou canst fly from thyself; when the pleasures, and delights, and honey, and beautiful countenances of those scorpions, thy fleshly lusts, will all be past and gone, but the sting remain to pierce and torment thee; when those dreggy waters in which thou bathest thyself now will all be dried up; when all thy possessions, and preferments, and friends, and relations will serve thee, as women their flowers when they are dead and withered, who throw them away, or as sinking floors, that will fail men when their weight is on them. And then, oh then, what wilt thou do? Thou wilt wish that religion had been thy business, and call and cry to it, as the elders of Gilead to Jephtha, when the children of Ammon made war with them: 'Come thou and be our captain, and save us from our enemies.' Come thou and be my captain, to save me from the curse of the law, the terrors of my guilty conscience, the wrath of the infinite God, and the torments of the eternal fire. But godliness will answer thee, as Jephtha did them: 'Did not ye hate me, and expel me out of my

father's house? and why are ye come unto me now ye are in distress?' Didst not thou hate me, and expel me out of thy heart and house? Didst thou not deride, and jeer, and persecute me, against all the commands, and threatenings, and promises, and entreaties of God and his word? And why art thou come to me now thou art in distress? I must tell thee, thou wilt then weep, and howl, and lament to God, as the Israelites did in their extremity: 'Deliver us only, we pray thee, this day.' Lord, help me, Lord, save me, deliver me this day from the jaws of the roaring lion; Lord, let not hell shut her mouth upon me. Who can dwell in everlasting burnings? who can abide devouring flames? But thou mayest expect the same answer which God gave them: 'Go and cry to the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation. Go to the flesh, and the world; go to thy riches, and honours, and sinful delights, which thou hast chosen and preferred before me; and let them deliver thee in this time of thy tribulation.' 'Where are those gods, the rocks in which thou trustedst? Let them rise up, and help thee, and be thy protection,' Judges xi. 6, 7, and x. 14, 15; Deut. xxxii. 37, 38.

A saint can sing in such a day of trial, knowing that death is come to him as the angel to Peter, striking on his side, not to hurt, but to awaken him, to beat off his fetters, and set him in the glorious liberty of the children of God.

The saint and the sinner never differ so much, at least in open view, as in their ends. Sin in the bud is sweet, but in the fruit bitter; and holiness, though at first draught seems not so pleasant, yet afterwards is all sweetness.

Though the path of sin be smooth, and pleasing to thy flesh, yet thou wilt find it slippery, and killing to thy spirit: it is like an evening star, to usher in a night of blackness, of darkness, for ever. The way of holiness is more harsh to the body, but the only nectar of the soul. Ah, reader, if thou wilt but choose it, thou wilt find by experience that it will be like Hannibal's passage over the Alps, a way which will require some pains, but it will lead thee into the heavenly paradise, as that did him into the world's garden, Italy.

Reader, let me therefore bespeak thee, or rather God himself: 'Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Turn unto me, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will turn unto thee, saith the Lord of hosts,' Zech. i. 3. After all thy neglect and contempt of God and his word, after all thy wanderings and wickedness, thou hast one call more to turn and live, in which thy Maker doth three times pawn and

interpose the authority of his name to confirm his word. The Lord of hosts: three times he doth as it were bring his angels, his hosts with him, in this precept and promise, as once to Sinai at the delivery of the law. 1. As witnesses of his truth; 2. As avengers of him on them that despise his call; 3. As rejoicers for those that turn unto him. O friend, consider it, that God, who might have turned thee into hell, commandeth thee now, after all thy folly and lewdness, to turn to him; yea, he promiseth that if thou dost come at his call, he will meet thee half way, and turn unto thee. It is not for his own sake that he is so earnest with thee, for he can be happy without thee; he hath no addition by thy salvation, he suffereth no diminution by thy damnation; but he calleth on thee for thy good, that thou mightst be happy in his favour. It was the saying of Antigona, that she ought to please them with whom she hoped to remain for ever. Ah, doth it not concern thee to please that God upon whom thou dependest for thy eternal weal or woe?

When Antiochus was in Egypt, in arms against the Romans, they sent P. Popilius with other ambassadors to him, where, when he had welcomed them, P. Popilius delivered some writings to him containing the mind of his masters, which he commanded Antiochus to read, which he did. Then he consulted with his friends what was best to be done in the business. Whilst he was in a great study. P. Popilius, with a wand that he had in his hand, made a circle about him in the dust, saying, Ere thou stir a foot out of this circle, return thy answer, that I may tell the senate whether thou hadst rather have war or peace. This he uttered with such a firm countenance, that it amazed the king; wherefore after he had paused awhile, he answered, I will do what the senate hath written, or shall think fit.[1]

Reader, I shall only allude to it, and conclude. Thou art, if in thy natural estate, a rebel against God; thy heart is full of enmity, and thy life of treason against his blessed Majesty; thou art daily discharging whole volleys of shot against him; he hath sent me as his ambassador to offer thee terms of peace, and to require thee in his name to throw down thine arms, and to submit to his mercy. I know thou art ready to consult with thy seeming friends, but real enemies, the world and the flesh, what thou wert best to do in this case; but whilst thou art thus musing, I charge and command thee in the name of God, and by his authority who sent me to thee, that before thou closest the book, thou return to thy

[1] Justin, lib. xxxiv.; Jos., lib. xii. cap. 5.

Maker in thy conscience thine answer, whether thou hadst rather have peace with him, whose wrath is infinitely worse than death, and whose favour is better than life, or war! If, considering the excellency, necessity, and profit of godliness, thou sayest, I will, through the help of Christ, do all that the Lord hath written, or thinketh fit to be done, in order to my recovery out of this estate of woe and misery, I shall inform thee that God is ready to receive thee, the Spirit to assist thee, thy Saviour to embrace thee, the rich and precious promises of the gospel, containing pardon, love, peace, eternal life, are all ready to welcome thee. But if thou deniest thy God, thy real, able, and faithful friend, and wilt gratify thy professed, though politic enemy, the devil, so much as to continue in thine ungodly courses, I must assure thee that, Phrygian-like, thou wilt repent when it is too late, and be taught by woeful experience that it had been far better to have hearkened to the counsels and commands of God; that with prudent Prometheus thou mightst have foreseen a danger, and shunned it, than to walk on in the broad way to hell with foolish Epimetheus, without any consideration, till thou art unconceivably and irrecoverably miserable, and plunged in that lake, and amidst those dreadful torments, of which there is no end.

HEAVEN AND HELL EPITOMISED.

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

To the Worshipful, and my esteemed friend, Richard Beresford, Esq., Clerk of the Pleas to His Majesty's Court of Exchequer.

It was the unhappiness of judicious Calvin, either through his own mistake, or the misreport of others, to retract his first Dedication of his Comment on the First Epistle to the Corinthians in another edition, and to prefix a new name before it, viz., the noble Galeacius Caricciolus, Marquis of Vico, wishing that either he had not known at all, or had known more fully, the person whose name he was forced to blot out.[1] I bless God I have not the least cause for the like course. But this small treatise (part whereof was formerly preached in your ears at the funeral of your dear mother) presenteth itself this second time to your eyes, not for your protection, (divine truths desire none from men, and human errors deserve none from any,) but for your direction. It containeth that in it which is able to make you wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

You have a double right to the dedication of this book: partly in regard of the occasion of it; partly in regard of the author's obligation unto you, which is great, for your liberality; but far greater for your encouraging of, and exemplariness in, the truth and life of Christianity.

I did not think myself a little bound to that providence which gave you relation to that parish whereof I was once minister, and I suppose not without cause, when the power of godliness hath few such considerable patrons. Men of your rank, though some-

[1] Utimam quo primum tempore in lucem prodiit hic Commentarius, vel mihi ignotus, vel saltem probe notus fuisset ille, cujus nomen huic paginæ hactenus inscriptum hinc delere cogor. — *Calv. Ep. Dedic. coram Comment.* 1 *Epist. Corinth.*

times, to stop the mouth of conscience, or for their credit, they take up a form and profession, yet do usually neglect, if not cursedly deride, the strictness and power of religion. They are too often, like the moon, furthest from, and in direct opposition unto, the Sun of righteousness, when they are at the full of outward plenty, and receive most light of divine bounty from him; their carnal hearts, as the sea, turn the showers of mercy from heaven, and fresh streams from the earth, into the salt waters of corruption.[1] In our natural bodies, the more fat there is, the less blood in the veins, and, by consequence, the fewer spirits. Greatness and goodness are beautiful and happy, but rare conjunctions.[2] You know who hath said, 'Not many such are called,' 1 Cor. i. 26; and experience teacheth us, that they are like stars of the first magnitude, thinly scattered in the firmament of a country. How much therefore are you engaged to that distinguishing love, which enableth you to look after the things of a better life!

I shall take the liberty, which I know you will give, to speak a few words to you by way of advice.

First, My counsel will be, that you would more and more ensure your effectual calling. We say, where men intend to live long, they build strong. I am confident all that you are worth, for your endless condition in the other world, dependeth, under Christ, upon your inward change. And if ever any wires had need to be firm and strong, then questionless they upon which such heavy weights hang as your eternal, unchangeable estate.

You have a large room in the hearts of many that are holy. But, alas, sir, the best man's confidence of me would prove but a bad evidence for heaven! He is not approved whom man commendeth, but whom the Lord commendeth.

The great affection which you bear to the souls of the people amongst whom ye were born, is worthy of imitation; and so is your care and cost in scattering some practical and home treatises in several families, whereby souls may be converted, and wherein you may have comfort at the day of Christ; for soul-charity is the soul of charity. But the best charity begins at home, though it never ends there; your main business lieth within your own

[1] There is scarce one of a thousand, *Cui præsens felicitas si arrisit non irrisit.*—*Bern.*, lib. ii. *De Consolat.*

[2] *Quies* hath no plural number; God seldom giveth two heavens. *Tamen aliquando Christus voluit Reginam in cœlum vehere,* saith Luther of Elizabeth, Queen of Denmark.—*Luth. in Epist. ad Jo. Agric.*

doors, to make sure that good work within you which shall be perfected hereafter.

The ordinary security which most men trust to, will not serve when they come in the other life to lay their claims, and shew their deeds for the inheritance of the saints in light. Many flaws will then be found in their evidences, which now, through their wilful blindness, they neither see nor fear. He had need to have armour of proof, that would enter the list with his enemy death, and not be foiled.[1] The heart not ballasted with renewing grace, may hold out in the calm of life, and shallows of time; but when it meets with the storm of death, and launcheth into the ocean of eternity, it suffereth a desperate and everlasting shipwreck. The want of this is the leak which sinketh many a precious vessel (soul I mean) in the gulf of perdition.

There is as much difference between a nominal and a real Christian, as between a lifeless picture and a living person. True Christianity, which consisteth in the soul's humble, unfeigned acceptation of, and hearty resolved dedication unto Christ, as Saviour and sovereign, is a paradox to most. There are many Christians, as Salvian complained in his time, without Christ;[2] but they which know experimentally what the sanctification of the Holy Ghost meaneth, are few indeed. The moralist in his best dress of civility, the formalist in his gaudy attire of ceremonies, and the hypocrite in all his royalty, is not arrayed like one of these. I do not write these things as in the least suspecting your sincerity, but to quicken you to a godly jealousy over your own soul. If the apostles and disciples needed such rousing cautions: 'Take heed lest that day come upon you unawares,' Luke xxi. 34; 'Take heed lest any man fail of the grace of God,' Heb. xii. 15; then much more you and I, who are more drowsy and prone to slumber, do require awakening considerations.

Secondly, That you would walk exemplarily. Man is a creature which is led more by the eye than the ear, by patterns than by precepts. Great men therefore, which are copies after which many write, had need to be exact. You are the looking-glasses by which others dress themselves; the heads of the people, Deut. i. 15; now the whole body will go along with the head.

You are like beacons upon a hill, visible to all.[3] The sun

[1] Pallens aurum melius est quam fulgens auricalchum.—*Bern.*

[2] Christiani sine Christo.—*Salv.*

[3] Qui in excelso agunt, eorum facta cuncti mortales novere.—*Sallust. ad Cæsarem.*

may as soon go unseen as you unobserved. A small star may be darkened, and none take notice of it; but if the great luminaries are eclipsed or obscured, a thousand eyes will be gazing on them. A little spot in silk or scarlet is more looked on than a great one in russet or sackcloth. A crack in a pebble is nothing so eyed or prejudicial as a small flaw in a jewel. *Corruptio optimi pessima.* Satan doth therefore plant his strongest batteries against the royal forts of magistracy and ministry, (whoever are spared, David and Peter shall be sifted,) knowing that he gaineth a double advantage by their miscarriage, example, and scandal; by which two wings it will soar higher, and fly much further. An ordinary tradesman may prove bankrupt without much noise; but if an alderman or merchant, that had a name for a great estate, breaks, the city and country ring of it. The honour of God and credit of the gospel are much engaged in the carriage of a gentleman that is a professor. The many eyes that look upon you, the many feet that follow after you, and the glory of the blessed God which is concerned in you, do all call aloud to you, to have your eyes in your head, (as the wise man's phrase is, Eccles. ii. 14,) to make straight paths for your feet, and to walk nobly, exactly, worthy of the Lord, even unto all well-pleasing.

Besides, honour is apt to be a snare and temptation, and therefore requireth the greater care and circumspection. Places of honour are like strong meats, which, being well concocted, yield much good nourishment, bring much glory to God, and good to souls; but they are of very hard digestion. He must have a strong brain that will bear much wine, and he much grace that will walk humbly and closely with God in a high condition.

In a word, your time is little, your work is great; your talents are many, your account will be weighty; your Saviour observeth every moment how tender you are of his honour, that was so tender of your eternal welfare; how you testify your thankfulness to him for all the bitter agony and ignominy which he suffered for you. You shall shortly never more have the least opportunity (though you would give a thousand worlds for it) to do anything in, for God's glory, your own and others' good. Work therefore the work of him that sent you into the world, while it is the day of your life, for the night of death is hastening on you, wherein you cannot work. Up and be doing, and the Lord be with you.

Sir, I have no more to speak to you, but that the hearer of prayers may hear often from you, that I may take heed to the ministry which I have received of the Lord, and fulfil it, and to

assure you that my prayers at the throne of grace shall be, that you and your religious consort may continue to dwell together as fellow-heirs of the grace of life; and your hopeful children may be planted with, and grow up in, grace, till they shall be transplanted into the true paradise, the kingdom of glory. This, through the help of heaven, shall be the petition of

Your real servant in the ever blessed Saviour,

George Swinnock.

TO THE READER.

Christian Reader,—There are two things which should be of highest regard with us, a serviceable life, and a comfortable death; and they are both so inseparably conjoined, that in vain do we hope for the one without the other. Which of these is to be preferred, was a doubt which put the apostle to an anxious disquisition. On the one side there was service, on the other side there was gain. If he lived, he should preach Christ, if he died, he should enjoy Christ, and remain with him for ever; therefore Paul was at a stand, and knew not what to determine. Surely he had a holy heart that could thus set duty against enjoyment, and think his service worthy to come into competition with his spiritual and eternal interests! That which made Paul so indifferent and incurious as to the means, was the resolved fixing of his scope—his end and scope was Christ's glory. Now, it was all one to him how God would use him to such a purpose; as a man that is resolved upon a journey, taketh the way as he findeth it, fair or foul; it is enough that it leadeth him to his journey's end; so Christ might be glorified, either by his ministry, or by martyrdom, Paul was indifferent; it was enough that Christ should be glorified. None have such an unfeigned respect to Christ's glory but those that live in the communion of his life. Men's tendency is according to the principle by which they are acted; carnal men, that act by their own life, and live upon their own root, bring forth fruit to themselves. Water riseth no higher than its fountain; but those that have life from Christ, use it for him; to them to live is Christ; as they live in him, and by him, so they live for him, and to him. We need then to take all occasions to press men to get into Christ, that they may live in the communion of his life, and in the strength and influence of it be carried out to his glory. This is that which will make life serviceable, and death sweet; and to this we need to be pressed by all kind of arguments

both those which are taken from God's relation to us, as also those which are taken from our expectations from him, Rom. xiv. 8. We are all the Lord's by every kind of right and title, and therefore owe all manner of service to him, even though nothing should come of it; but they that do the Lord's work will not want his wages; though he might require our service out of mere sovereignty, yet he condescendeth to propound a reward, and that so full and ample, that it should ravish our hearts every time we think of it. These considerations, which I have here loosely discoursed of, are notably improved in the ensuing treatise, which being communicated to me by a friend of the author, I could not but return it with this character, that it is a discourse grave and judicious, and yet quickened with such warmth and vigour of illustration, as that it may be of great use to awaken men unto more seriousness in the great concernments of their souls, among which nothing can be more momentous than our living in Christ, that we may live to him, and then with him for evermore. This being signified, I leave thee to the work itself, which I cannot but judge to proceed from one both of a good head and heart, and profess myself

Thine in the service of the gospel,

THO. MANTON.

THE

PREFACE AND EPISTLE TO THE READER

ESPECIALLY OF THE PARISH OF RICKMERSWORTH IN HERTFORDSHIRE, AND BORDEN IN KENT: AS ALSO THE OCCASION OF THIS TREATISE.

I HAVE sometimes considered with myself, (not without some remorse and grief of spirit,) the multitudes of men and women, that even in those places where the word of God is plainly and powerfully taught, run headlong in the broad way which leadeth to destruction. And, indeed, if my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night, (though every tear were a tear of blood,) I could never sufficiently bewail the slain of the daughter of my people, of that parish to which the providence of God hath called me.

That the lying vanities of this world should by most be so greedily pursued, and the real mercies relating to a better world so wretchedly despised; that a brutish flesh, which must shortly be food for worms, should be so highly prized and constantly gratified, and an angelical spirit, the soul, which must live for ever, be so basely slighted and unworthily neglected; that every soul-damning lust should be so heartily embraced, and the soul-saving Lord but coldly and complimentally entertained; that the road to hell should be so exceedingly filled, and the way to heaven almost wholly unoccupied;—surely this ought to be for a bitter lamentation; and oh, what sea of blood is enough to bemoan this horrid wickedness!

It hath seemed to me, therefore, a matter worthy of diligent inquiry, what special malefactors should be indicted for these many soul-mischiefs, and soul-murders. which are committed amongst us.

And truly, by that acquaintance which I have with the word of God, and experience of the soul-affairs of men, I find, though many accessories might be named, that ignorance ought to be arraigned and condemned as one of the principals: 'The people perish for want of knowledge,' Hosea iv. 6. Inner darkness is the beaten path to utter darkness, to the blackness of darkness for ever. Men in this mist of ignorance, like ships, run upon those rocks which split them eternally. As the Indians prefer every toy and trifle before their mines of gold; so they every sensual, sinful pleasure, every foolish, perishing creature, before the beautiful image of God, the unsearchable riches in Christ, the endless happiness in heaven; because they know not the vanity and emptiness of the former, the excellency and preciousness of the latter. *Ignoti nulla cupido.* Did men know the gift of God, and who it is that speaketh to them, and what he offereth, they would ask of him, and he would give them living waters, John iv. 10.

What is the reason that so many make a mock of sin, and dance merrily over the infernal pit, and play with the unquenchable fire, but ignorance? The child doth not know that the fire will burn him. As the horse, they rush into the battle—fighting against God and their souls—not knowing it will be to their destruction, to their damnation. These Balaams run greedily after the wages of unrighteousness, not seeing the angel that standeth in the way with a drawn sword in his hand ready to kill them. Did they know what they do, when they wilfully break God's law, they would sooner leap into a furnace of scalding lead, than provoke so jealous a God. But sin goeth in a disguise, and thence is welcome; like Judas, it kisseth and kills; like Joab, it salutes and slays. The foolish sinner seeth the pleasant streams of Jordan, but not the Dead Sea, into which they will certainly empty themselves to his ruin.

What is the reason that the devil carrieth so many captive at his will, leadeth them whither he pleaseth, but ignorance? They are ignorant of his wiles, of his devices; they know not, as drunken Lot of his daughters, when he cometh, nor when he goeth. The prince of darkness takes up his throne in dark understandings: 'The god of this world blindeth their minds,' 2 Cor. iv. 4, 'lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine upon them.' How easy is it for him to lead blind men out of the way, and then to destroy them! As Pliny saith the eagle deals with the hart, she lights upon his horns, and there flutters up and down, filling his eyes with dust, borne in her feathers, that at last he may cast himself from the rock, and so be made a prey unto her; so the wicked

one bindeth a muffler before men's eyes, and then turneth them off the ladder, and executes them.

What is the cause of men's scandalous practices, but ignorance? 'The dark corners of the earth are full of the habitation of cruelty,' Ps. lxxiv. 20; the flood-gates of wickedness are open, when the door of knowledge is shut. The cause why there was no mercy nor truth in the land, but swearing, and lying, and stealing, committing adultery, and blood touching blood, was ignorance, Hosea iv. 1, 2. This is the root of bitterness on which those cursed fruits grow; this is the blind captain which, like Zilpah, hath a Gad—a troop of enormities following him. Paul thanks ignorance for his blasphemy and persecuting the church, 1 Tim. i. 13. The reason why the heathen did not call on God, was because they did not know him, Ps. lxxix. 6. The most ugly and monstrous wickedness which ever was hatched or brought forth, calleth ignorance mother. 'Had they known, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory,' 1 Cor. ii. 8; Acts iii. 15, 17. What Augustine saith of original sin, is, in some respects, true of ignorance; it is *peccatum, pœna peccati, et causa peccati;* it is a sin as contrary to the law of God, which requireth men to know him, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9; Lev. v. 15, 18. It is the punishment of sin, as the fruit of our apostasy from God; it is the cause of sin, as toads and serpents grow in dark cellars; as blind ale-houses are sinks and sources of all villanies, so are dark and blind hearts. They are 'strangers to the life of God through the ignorance that is in them,' Eph. iv. 18.

What is the cause of men's erroneous principles, but ignorance?[1] They err, not knowing the Scriptures, Mat. xxii. 29. Impostors, like cozening tradesmen, when they have men in a dark shop, put what rotten, deceitful ware they please into their hands; they lead captive silly women, that are ever learning, and never coming to the knowledge of the truth, 2 Tim. iii. 6, 7. Heretics, like nurses, may put meat or poison into their mouths who are babes in understanding; they that are children in knowledge will be tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine. The blind man eats many a fly, and the ignorant man swallows many an error. Men will easily be brought to deny the truths which they understand not, and to 'speak evil of the things which they know not,' Jude 10. *Simul ac desinunt ignorare, desinunt odisse*, saith Tertullian (*in Apolog.*) of them that condemned the Christian religion.

[1] Ignorantiæ duæ pessimæ filiæ, Falsitas et Dubietas.—*Aug. de Civit. Dei*, lib. xxii. cap. 22.

What is the reason that men put God off, either with no service or worship at all, or else with a few cold, superficial, lazy duties, without either heat or life, but their ignorance? They know not the majesty, purity, jealousy, and severity of God; they worship they know not whom, and therefore they worship him they care not how. Their altars are of any slight form or fashion, because, like the Athenians, they are dedicated to the unknown God; they that know not their master's will cannot obey it. Some cry up their good meanings to excuse their ignorance; but ignorant devotion is like feet without eyes, which the farther they carry men, the greater is their wandering and woe.

What is the reason that men take up short of Christ, and renewing grace; that they please themselves with the shadow instead of the substance of religion; that they cry peace, peace to their souls, only upon some outward privileges, or a few inward good meanings, as they call them, when they are in a most damnable condition, and sudden destruction is ready to seize on them, as travail on a woman with child, which they cannot escape. Surely it is ignorance of the nature of Christianity and sanctification; they know not what regeneration is, and what faith and repentance are, which are the conditions upon which salvation may be had. Therefore they rest in forms, which will fade, when their hearts and lives deny the power of godliness. This, this is, not as papists would persuade their deluded votaries, the mother of devotion, but the monster which causeth such hideous births of corruption; this is the epidemical disease that reigneth all the year long, and killeth, I fear, more souls than any of our new distempers doth bodies: 'For the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: which shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power,' 2 Thes. i. 7–9. This, this is the source of men's sins on earth, and eternal sufferings in hell.

But one would think such truths as these might be seasonable in Turkey or India, or in Spain and Italy, where the tree of knowledge is forbidden fruit, where they may not read their Father's mind in their mother tongue; but is it possible that in England, where the will and word of God is more powerfully preached, more practically applied, more clearly discovered, than in any nation of the world, there should be any ignorant persons? Alas, alas! we find by woeful experience that there are many, very many, Indians

and heathen, for ignorance, in England; men and women that know as little of God and holiness, of Christ, his natures, offices, of true faith and repentance, as if they had been born and bred up all their time in Turkey or India. I am ashamed to write what I know of the sottish, stupid, hellish ignorance of many, and some that are aged too, that are going to die, and yet never knew what it was to live, either to God or their souls. The good Lord affect my heart more with the danger and dreadfulness of their eternal conditions!

Oh how sad is it that so many precious souls should lie lazing on their beds of security and idleness, and though the sun shine brightly in upon them, they will not draw their curtains and open their eyes to behold it! That in a valley of vision, a Goshen, a land of light, thousands should live and die in worse than Egyptian darkness; that the Bible should be a sealed book to them, and almost every one have the dark side of that glorious pillar towards him!

Reader, to cure this soul-murdering distemper, I have endeavoured, according to the trust committed to me, and the grace bestowed on me, to discover in this treatise the life in Christ, or true Christianity, with the matchless, endless felicity that accompanieth it; as also the nature and danger of unregeneracy, with the means to come out of it, by which thou mayest see that many cozen their souls with counterfeit coin (false evidences for heaven) instead of true, which will not abide the touchstone of Scripture; and so, like Uriah, they carry those letters about them, though they know it not, which will at last cost them their lives, and cause their eternal deaths. That there is no fool like the sinner who selleth his soul for a song; his Saviour, his eternal happiness, the unspeakable pleasures at God's right hand for evermore, for the perishing, empty profits, and base, brutish pleasures of sin, which are but for a season. That, though sin be delightful in the act, to carnal wretches, yet it will be bitterness in the end. It will be a bitter-sweet to all its lovers, when for their momentary pleasure they shall be recompensed with eternity of intolerable, unconceivable pain; that it is not for nothing that ministers call so loudly and earnestly to thee to kill those lusts which would kill thee, and to 'follow after holiness, without which no man shall ever see the Lord,' Heb. xii. 14. It will teach thee that God and Christ, heaven and hell, thy soul and eternity, death and judgment, are not things to be dallied with; believe it, thou wilt one day find that it is bad jesting with such edged tools. Surely the greatest serious-

ness that is imaginable is too too little for them. Oh hadst thou but the thousandth part of that seriousness about them which they deserve and call for at thy hands, thou wouldst have other manner of thoughts of them, and carriage towards them, than now thou hast. Well, I have four special things at present from the living God to commend to thee, and leave with thee, in order to thine eternal good, (I know not how soon I may be taken from thee.) If thou lovest thy soul, practise them faithfully; if not, answer the contrary when thou and I shall meet in the other world, at the great and terrible day of the Lord Jesus.

First, Do thou labour for the knowledge of God and his Son, thyself, and the duty which thou owest to thy Maker and Redeemer. Hast thou not read the doleful consequence of ignorance? and doth it not nearly concern thee to get out of that damnable condition?

Without this thou canst never be religious, notwithstanding all thy pretences that thou meanest well, and hast as good a heart as the best: 'If thou knowest not the God of thy fathers, thou canst never serve him with a perfect heart,' 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. All thy worship will be but wild, and wandering from God; all thy services but the sacrifice of a fool. The foundation of obedience must be laid in knowledge, Mal. i. 8; till then thou offerest up to the Lord, the lame and blind, which he will not accept. God expecteth reasonable services, Rom. xii. 1; such for which thou canst give a good reason out of his word, which must be the warrant of thy worship. Be not therefore in shape a man, a reasonable creature, and, as Nebuchadnezzar, in heart a beast; be not as the horse and mule, which hath no understanding, Ps. xxxii. 9.

Without knowledge thou canst not be saved: 'If the gospel be hid, it is hid to them that perish,' 2 Cor. iv. 3. Wilful ignorance is a sad sign that thou art in God's black bill. If God will ever have thee to be saved, he will bring thee to the knowledge of this truth, 1 Tim. ii. 4. When Haman's face was covered, his execution was near. Do not delude and destroy thy soul by presuming that thy ignorance will not damn thee; for if thou art without knowledge, he that made thee will not save thee, and he that formed thee will shew thee no mercy, Isa. xxvii. 11. Mark, reader, but this one place, Ps. xcv. 10, 11, where the God of truth confirmeth it by an oath, that they which do not know his ways shall not enter into his rest. One would think that a prisoner should be both earnest and diligent to learn his neck verse, who knoweth he must be hanged if he cannot read; and dost not thou read in broad

characters, in the word of God, that thou must be an eternal monument of divine fury in hell, if thou dost not learn to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent? Doth it not then behove thee to be diligent for knowledge?

1. How shouldst thou wait on the word of God, which enliveneth the mind, and maketh wise the simple! Ps. xix. 7, 8. David had more understanding than the ancients, because God's word was his meditation,[1] Ps. cxix. 98, 99. Watch at wisdom's gate, with a humble, hungry soul, and God may fill thee with good things. God maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by his ministers in every place, 2 Cor. ii. 14. If thou wouldst see, go where the sun shineth.

2. Ply the throne of grace with incessant prayers, that God would enlighten thy mind in the knowledge of his will.[2] If any man lack wisdom or knowledge, let him ask it of God, who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not, James i. 5. Entreat him to open thine eyes, that thou mayest see the wonderful things contained in his law, Ps. cxix. 18. 'If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasure; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom; out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding,' Prov. ii. 3–6.

3. Take heed of sinning against those commands which thou knowest. Hold not the truth in unrighteousness. Do not wanton away the light, lest God give thee up to judiciary darkness. Thou knowest thou shouldst pray with thy family, and in secret; make conscience of the Lord's day, instruct thy children, forbear drunkenness, swearing, lying, uncleanness, and the like. Be sure thou do not shut up this knowledge in thy conscience, and deny it in thy conversation, lest, as a candle pent up in a dark lantern, it swail out quickly: 'If any man will do my will, he shall know my doctrine whether it be of God or no,' John vii. 17. To practise what you know is the way to know what to practise. Knowledge is the mother of obedience, it breeds it; and obedience is the nurse of knowledge, it feedeth and nurtureth it. If thou improvest thy little stock well, doubt not but God will add to it and increase it; leave no means untried for the obtaining this purchase. I have offered to instruct thee to my power in the mysteries of Christ, appointed also days for that end; it may be thou art one of those many that art too old to learn, that scorn to be taught. I would ask thee one question, and think of it, Art thou not too old to be saved? Dost

[1] Auditus est sensus disciplinæ.

[2] Bene orasse est bene studuisse.

thou not scorn to go to heaven? Surely thou dost; by contemning the way, thou scornest the end. Well, take heed thou dost not die without knowledge; for if thou dost, all the world cannot keep thee one quarter of an hour out of hell, and then thou wilt have time enough to befool thyself for refusing a good offer, and wilfully rejecting, through thy pride, those things which concerned thine eternal peace. I shall conclude this head with the words of that eminent and pious writer:[1]

How long, saith he, may a poor minister sit in his study before any of the ignorant sort will come upon that errand—*i.e.*, to learn the knowledge of God and themselves? Lawyers have their clients, and physicians their patients; these are sought after, and called up at midnight for counsel; but, alas! the soul, which is more worth than raiment and body too, that is neglected, and the minister seldom thought on till both these be sent away. Perhaps, when the physician gives them over for dead, then we must come and close up their eyes with comfort, which were never opened to see Christ in his truth, or else be counted cruel because we will not sprinkle them with this holy water, and anoint them for the kingdom of heaven, though they know not a step of the way that leads to it. Ah, poor wretches, what comfort would you have us speak to those to whom God himself speaks terror! Is heaven ours to give to whom we please? or is it in our power to alter the laws of the Most High, and save those whom he condemns? Do you remember the curse that is to fall upon his head that maketh the blind to wander out of the way? Deut. xxvii. 18; what curse then would be to our portion if we should confirm such blind souls as are quite out of the way to heaven—encouraging them to go on, and expect to reach heaven at last, when, God knows, their feet stand in those paths that lead to eternal death? No, it is written, we cannot. God will not reverse it; you may read your very names among those damned souls which Christ comes in flaming fire to take vengeance on, 2 Thes. i. 8. And therefore, in the fear of God, let this provoke you, of what age or sex, rank or condition soever you be, to labour for the saving knowledge of God in Christ, whom to know is life eternal, John xvii. 3.

Secondly, Do not rest in bare knowledge, but endeavour to get thy will, affections and heart renewed. A clear head must be accompanied with a clean heart; saving knowledge is ever a sanctifying knowledge. Content not thyself with anything short of regeneration and the power of godliness. Mr Robert Bolton, when

[1] Mr Gurnal, Arm., part i. pp. 239, 240.

dying, told his children that he verily believed none of them durst think to meet him at the great tribunal in an unregenerate estate;[1] so I am confident that none of you can with any comfort, nay, without unspeakable horror and sorrow, meet me at the bar of Christ in your natural estates. Oh how sad will it be for thee that art now asleep in sin, to awake, like the jailer, at the midnight of death, and to find this inward change, this new creation, this life in Christ missing! what a heartquake will possess thee! how pale and trembling wilt thou spring into the presence of Christ in the other world for thy particular judgment! Consider, thy profession will not serve turn; the storm of death will wash out all colours of profession that are not laid in the oil of renewing grace, Mat. xxv. 8.

Thy privileges will not do it; circumcision is nothing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature, Gal. vi. 15. Thou mayest enjoy Scripture, and Sabbaths, and sacraments, and many seasons of grace, and hell at last; nay the higher thy exaltation, in regard of these privileges, if thou diest unconverted, the greater thy condemnation will be. None go to such chambers of utter darkness as they that are lightened thither with the torches of ordinances. Heathen will keep holiday in hell in comparison of those that are now lifted up to heaven and perish. If the sweetest wine make such sharp vinegar, and the cold lead when melted be so hot and scalding, how pure and weighty will that wrath be which shall be extracted out of abused love and mercy! Grace is the sweetest friend, but the bitterest enemy. If thou waste the riches of grace, God will recover out of thee riches of glory. Thy performances also can be no infallible evidence of thy good estate. The pharisees prayed, fasted, did, many of them, abound in outward acts of charity, righteousness, and holiness (which are commanded by God, and must be minded by all that will be saved); and yet Christ telleth us expressly, that except our righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, we shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven, Mat. v. 20. There was in them, as in the young man, one thing wanting, and that was the regeneration of their natures, the actual predominancy of the interest of God and Christ in their hearts, above all interest of the flesh and world. I beseech thee, therefore, make sure of the new birth, without which it is impossible for thee to escape the second death. I have in the third use of this treatise endeavoured to awaken thee to, and to direct thee about, this great work, as in the first use I have

[1] Mr Bolton's Life by Mr Bagshaw.

discovered the unspeakable endless misery of them that die before it be done. Those which had the *sudor Anglicus*, or sweating sickness, died assuredly if suffered to sleep; those were their best friends that kept them waking, though they possibly had little thank for it. It may be thou mayest think I am too sharp; but, truly, the wound is deep, dangerous, yea, deadly, and therefore, though I put thee to pain by lancing it, I am forced to it, otherwise thou wilt not be cured. Sin, and hell, and holiness, and sanctification are other manner of things than the sleepy world dreameth of.

The Lord give thee a heart to obey his counsel in order to thy conversion, and then I am sure thou wilt have cause to give him thanks that I would not let thee sleep quietly on a bed that was in a flame, nor in a condition that was next door to infinite misery and eternal desperation.

Thirdly, Exalt godliness in thy family. If once Christ be chief in thy heart, I am confident he will, to thy utmost power, be so in thy house—that thou art really, which thou art relatively. Labour that thy children and servants may know and serve God: 'Dwell with thy wife as a man of knowledge, as heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered,' 1 Peter iii. 7. 'Bring up thy children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,' Eph. vi. 4. Teach thy servants their duty to God and their own souls. Consider, these are the laws of the righteous God; and ere long, when thou shalt leave all the dying and lying vanities of this world, thou must give an account in the other world how thou hast obeyed them. God hath committed a great trust to thee, even the charge of the souls of all in thy family; and doth not thine heart tremble to think of soul-blood, of soul-murder! I assure thee thou mayest be as truly and really guilty of their deaths and damnations by starving them, as by poisoning them. I mean by not instructing, catechising, and principling them in the things of God; by not praying with them, and overseeing that they mind the worship of God, as in making them drunk, and teaching them to steal and swear.

For thy children, dost thou not know that they are born children of wrath, and heirs of hell? and canst thou be quiet till thou seest in them some signs and hopes of regeneration, an interest in Christ, and thereby a right to heaven? When thou readest of Herod, how he murdered poor children, thou condemnest him; thou thinkest, Ah, hard-hearted Herod! but dost not thou do ten thousand times worse, in murdering the souls and bodies of thy dear children for ever? Ah, hard-hearted, ah bloody father! Herod was a man of

bowels, a merciful man to thee. Is it any wonder to hear, saith one, of that ship sunk, or dashed upon a rock, that was put to sea without card or compass? nor is it a wonder to hear children sinking in perdition, who are thrust into the world, which is a sea of temptations, without any knowledge of God and their duty. One would think, every time thou readest and hearest of the extremity and eternity of hell's torments, of the multitudes that must undergo them, of the few even of those within the visible church that shall be saved, and of the difficulty of obtaining salvation, that thy loins should tremble, and thy joints smite together; that thy head, yea, heart, should ache, for fear any of thy dear children should be among those many that must drink that cup of the Lord's pure wrath; and that thou shouldst be restless night and day in wrestling with God, and instructing them in using all means to prevent their endless ruin; surely, if thou hadst a spark of true love to thy children, thus it would be with thee.

And for thy servants, unless thou art careful that they serve the Lord, they are but little beholden to thee for thy service. Thou givest them, possibly, food and outward things convenient, but dost thou not do as much for thy cattle? And is it, thinkest thou, enough to do no more for those souls which must live in unspeakable pain or pleasure for ever, than for thy beasts? If he that provideth not for the bodies of his family, be worse than an infidel, 1 Tim. v. 8, surely he that provideth not for their souls is kin to a devil. Say not, They are stubborn and will not be taught. Hast not thou power in thy hands either to teach them, or turn them out of doors? Let none serve thee that will not serve God. Thou wilt not keep a servant that knoweth not how to do thy work, at least, if he will not learn, and then follow it with diligence. Now, let thy conscience be judge: Is not God's work, the pleasing and glorifying his infinite Majesty, of far greater concernment than thy greatest and weightiest work? and darest thou keep one that neither knoweth how to do it, nor will learn? Follow the man after God's own heart: Ps. ci. 2, 7, 'I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me. He that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.' It is said of Constantine, that in this he was truly great, that he would have his whole court gathered together, and cause the Scriptures to be read to them, and instruction to be given them from the word of God.

Besides, if thou didst but regard thy own temporal good, thou wouldst instruct thy servants and children in spiritual things; for

they that are unfaithful to their Master and Father in heaven, will be unfaithful to their master and father on earth. They that make no conscience of their duty to God, but rob him of his service and worship, will never make conscience of their duty to thee, but if they have opportunity, will rob thee of thy time, service, and goods.

Be sure that thou perform family duties, as praying, reading, and the like, morning and evening. Do not serve the flesh and the world all day, and then put off God with a few sleepy petitions at night: the command is 'Pray continually,' 1 Thes. v. 17. Daniel was at it three times a day, Dan. vi. 10; David seven times a day, Ps. cxix. 164. God's mercies are renewed on thee every morning, and should not thy prayers and praises be renewed every morning? Doth not the preservation of thy family every night deserve family acknowledgment in the morn? Wearisome nights are appointed to others; the beds of others prove their graves; thou and thine might have awaken in hell; doth this distinguishing mercy deserve no thanks? Is not thy family every day liable to many dangers, both bodily and spiritual? Doth it not need pitying, sanctifying, pardoning, directing, preventing mercy every day, nay, every moment? and is not all this worth a prayer? Upon no account neglect the offering up of these morning and evening sacrifices. Let thy prayers, and of the rest in the family, come up before the Lord in the morning like incense, and the lifting up of thine hands at night as an evening sacrifice.

Do not say, as sometimes I have heard of thee, that thou canst not spare time for these duties; thy family is great, and thou canst not get them altogether; thy business is great, and a little time spent this way may wrong thee; I answer thee,

1. Canst thou get all thy family together twice a day to set meals for their bodies, and canst not thou get them together twice a day for set meals, family duties, for their souls?

2. What greater or weightier business canst thou have, than the working out the salvation of thy own, and the souls committed to thy charge? Are not the most important affairs thou canst possibly deal about but toys and trifles to this?

3. Was not David's family greater than thine, and his occasions weightier? and yet he could find time, though a king, for family duties, Ps. cxix. 164. He and his queen did both instruct their child in the things of God, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9; Prov. iv. 3–10, and xxxi. If thou art poor, and sayest thou art to provide for thy family, see an answer to that in this book, though God will give

you both another manner of answer to your foolish pretences, when ye appear at the judgment-seat of Christ.

Have a special care also of the sanctification of the Lord's-day in thy family. Remember the living God commandeth thee that thou, thy son, thy daughter, thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and all within thy gate keep that day holy. Do not make the sins of others thine by thy pattern or permission; let not that queen of days be deflowered or profaned by idleness, earthly thoughts, words, or actions. Spend the whole time which thou sparest from the public ordinances in secret and private duties, as praying, reading, singing, catechising, taking an account of thy children and servants, what they know of the mysteries of Christ, and particularly what they have learned that day. Esteem it a special privilege, a great mercy, that thou and thine may upon that day sequester yourselves wholly from worldly employments, and enjoy communion with the blessed God in the means of grace. This I shall be bold to tell thee, that religion, and the service of the most high God in thy family, dependeth much, yea, very much, upon thy observation of the Lord's-day. Thou mayest expect its increase or decrease according to the sanctification or profanation of it. In the primitive times, when the question was, *Servasti Dominicum?* The answer was, *Christianus sum, omittere non possum.* Thou pretendest to be a Christian, make conscience of every minute of that day of Christ. Be sure that thou, and as many of thy family as can possibly be spared, attend with all diligence and reverence at the public place of worship. There God receiveth greatest praises, and there he bestoweth the choicest mercies: 'Oh blessed are they that dwell in his house; blessed are they that wait at wisdom's gates; that watch at the posts of her doors,' Prov. viii. In all things shew thyself a pattern to them that are under thy care and charge; the people committed to thy government will sooner imitate thy doings than obey thy sayings. Sin cometh in at first by propagation, but is increased exceedingly by imitation. Thou that hast thy children and servants following thee, either to heaven or to hell, hast need choose a right path, even the narrow way that leadeth to life. Weigh thy words, considering that they will learn thy language. Avoid those sinful expressions of faith and truth—let your yea be yea, and your nay nay, for whatsoever is more is evil—of repeating others' oaths, of speaking irreverently of the great God and his word, of wishing evil to any man; for the command is, 'Bless them that curse,' Mat. v. 44. Let no evil communication proceed out of thy lips, but let thy speech be seasoned with grace, that it may administer good,

and be exemplary to the hearers. Look well to thy works, that they may be agreeable to the word of God.

In thy religious performances especially manifest all reverence, fervency, and seriousness, that thy children and servants may see that thou art in earnest about soul affairs, about eternity concernments. Thou little knowest how profitable such a pattern may be unto them. Do thy utmost, use all means commanded thee to save thyself and those that dwell with thee.

Be confident that shortly Christ will say to thee, as Eliab to David, 'With whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness?' What is become of the children and servants which I entrusted thee with? Will it be enough, thinkest thou, for thee then to answer, Lord, for my children, I brought them up without any charge to the parish; or, Lord, I bred them gentlemen; or, I put them out to trades; or, I left them competent estates; and for my servants, I paid them their wages, gave them their meat and drink, according to my agreement with them? When Christ shall reply, Man, what is become of their souls, which I created capable of the immediate fruition of myself, which I redeemed with my precious blood? What shame will then cover thy face, and what horror fill thy heart, when the blood of their souls shall be required of thee! Oh therefore let Joshua's practice and resolution be thine, that 'thou and thy house will serve the Lord,' Joshua xxiv. 15.

Fourthly, Make religion, and the worshipping and glorifying the great God, the great business of thy whole life. Improve all thy time, power, estate, interest, and talents whatsoever to the utmost, for the honour of God and thine own everlasting good. Look on thyself as created, preserved, supplied with nightly, daily, hourly mercies—not for the service of the flesh, no, that end were mean and low, but that thou mightst be enabled unto and encouraged in the service of the glorious God. Surely, saith that noble Lord du Plessis, if all the world were made for man, then man was made for more than the world.[1] All the favours thou enjoyest are but baits laid by God to catch thy soul; as they come all from him, so let them be improved all for him. It is godliness alone that will hold out when thou comest to the greatest hardships at the day of affliction and the hour of thy dissolution. The good man and his godliness are like Saul and Jonathan, lovely in their lives, and in their deaths they are not divided; therefore exercise thyself unto godliness. It may be thou art one to whom God has given much in the world;

[1] In the epistle before Veritas Christia. Relig.

I must tell thee that much will be required of thee. The greater thy receipts are, the greater thy returns must be, and the larger thy disbursements for God: 'Make to thyself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when that faileth thou mayest be received into the celestial habitation.' The way to get that which thou canst not part with, is by charity to part with that which thou canst not keep. Thou canst not carry thy bags to heaven; it is good to take bills of exchange from the poor, whereby thou mayest receive there what thou couldst not carry thither. *Laudent te esurientium viscera, non ructantium opulenta convivia,* saith Jerome. It is storied of Alexander, that having given away almost all he had, one of his friends asked him where his treasure was, he answered, pointing to the poor, *In scriniis,* in his chest. He asked what he had left for himself, Alexander answers, *Spem majorem.* Let thy charity especially relate to the souls of people. What were it for thee to maintain four or six poor children at school, whereby they may come to read, and learn to know the way to life? Doth it not grieve thee to understand the gross ignorance of many? And what do they tell us, when we reprove them for it? that they are not book learned, they could never read! What were it for thee, that hast possibly several hundreds per annum, to give twenty pounds a year this way? I tell thee that God expecteth more than this for his service; and I am confident thou mayest have more comfort in such acts of soul-charity than in ten times the value bestowed on the world and the flesh. I am sure God keeps an exact account how thou employest thy revenues; and think of it again and again, what thou wilt do in such an hour, when thou shalt stand naked at the judgment-seat of Christ, and all thy receipts and disbursements shall be declared and mentioned before the Lord, angels, and men.

When, *imprimis,* pride cometh with her tailor's long bill of so many thousands for new fashions, foolish fancies, or gaudy attire for thee or thine, when the poor members of Christ were ready to perish with nakedness; *item,* gluttony, or drunkenness, or luxury, so many thousands; *item,* so many hundreds for hawks, or hounds, or gaming; *item,* so many hundreds for idle, needless expenses; *item,* for propagating the gospel, relieving the poor, exalting the interest of Christ, so many pounds, or only some few scraps, which the knight, or esquire, or gentleman could spare, after he had made full provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. Believe it, thou wilt wish then thou hadst done more for God and his interest, and less for the flesh. It was a wise speech of Lycon the philosopher,

when a wealthy merchant bragged to him of the multitudes of his ships and furniture for sea, how he was able to trade into all parts, I esteem not that to be felicity which hangs upon ropes and cables.[1] Sure I am thy wealth hath wings, and will within a few days take an eternal flight from thee. The way to make the best of it is not to lay it up, but to lay it out as may be most for the glory of God.

Whoever thou art, whether poor or rich, make an absolute dedication of thyself and thy all unto Christ, if thou wouldst attain salvation by Christ. He that cannot live of himself, must not live to himself; for if he doth, he dieth eternally, he loseth himself for ever. If heaven might be had upon men's cursed terms of liberty for their lusts, Christ would have customers enough; but he that bought the purchase is fittest to set the price.

Reader, I set before thee in this treatise life and death, heaven and hell; if thou art a true Isaac, and hast a spiritual appetite, I dare promise thee such savoury meat as thy soul loveth; but if, Gallio-like, thou carest for none of these things, or, as the two tribes and a half, desirest thy portion on this side the land of Canaan; if, as Spira, thou wilt put thy relations and possessions, honour and pleasure, and outward good things, in one scale, and God, and Christ, and heaven in the other, and then choose the former, and refuse the latter, I hope I shall never envy thy happiness, nor desire to eat of thy dainties, or drink of thy cup, but pray that the Lord would have mercy on thee, and change thy heart; only let me tell thee, if thou wouldst avoid the inconceivable endless misery of the damned; if thou wouldst attain the eternal matchless felicity of the saved; if thou wouldst have all thy former rebellions blotted out through the blood of the Son; if thou wouldst have thy person reconciled to the Father; if thou wouldst have God in Christ to stand by thee when none of thy friends or comforts shall own thee; if thou wouldst appear at the dreadful bar of Christ with comfort, when thousands and millions shall weep and wail; if thou wouldst not have me nor this book to be a witness against thee before the Lord, angels, and men, then turn from sin speedily, cleave to thy Saviour unfeignedly, give up thyself to all the commands of Christ unreservedly. 'To-day if thou wilt hear his voice, harden not thy heart, lest he swear in his wrath that thou shalt never enter into his rest,' Heb. iii.

Reader, I shall detain thee but a little longer in the porch, only to give thee a brief account of this ensuing tractate; though I con-

[1] Laert.

fess I never liked large apologies for any publications; for if men's books are like to be serviceable to the honour of the infinite God, and the welfare of the souls of men, a small apology will serve; if they are not, why do they trouble the world with them? It is not all the image and superscription, which their excuses can stamp on them, shall ever make them current coin with me. I was called to preach a sermon at Borden, in Kent, October 17, 1658, at the funeral of a grave, religious gentlewoman, (one that, as I am informed, was a tender mother of her children, and a dutiful daughter to the Father of spirits,) Mrs Beresford, widow of Mr Michael Beresford, a learned, painful, godly minister of the Lord Jesus Christ, who had a good report of all men that feared God and knew him, and of the truth itself. He was minister of the above-named parish above twenty years.

I was, after the preaching of it, requested to publish it, and promised that a considerable number should be freely scattered in several families, whereby, through the blessing of God, some poor souls might be turned from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God. Before I had prepared the sermon for the press, I was entreated to enlarge it into a treatise. All which desires I was willing to satisfy, partly out of the great respect I did bear to one[1] especially that earnestly begged it, but chiefly out of the weak desire I had to be instrumental for the conversion of the souls of them to whom the sermon was preached, and of the parish which the Lord had committed to my charge. I considered with myself, that by reason of my sickly and infirm body I was not likely to continue long with that people to which the providence of God did at first join me, and from which far greater things could never divorce me; and therefore it might not be needless to leave to them some testimony of my unfeigned desires of their eternal welfares. Who knoweth what this mean piece may do, if the divine power please to accompany it? Possibly out of the seed that is here sown, when the husbandman is dead, a harvest may be reaped of glory to God and good to souls.

Reader, if thou gain any spiritual profit by it, let God have the praise; and let him be remembered in thy prayers who is

Thy servant for Christ's sake,

George Swinnock.

[1] Mr John Beresford, citizen and apothecary, one that feareth the Lord above many.

HEAVEN AND HELL EPITOMISED.

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.—PHIL. i. 12.

CHAPTER I.

The division of the chapter, and interpretation of the text.

IT is a memorable observation of that Christian heathen, as he hath been sometimes called, that the two great lessons which every man hath to learn in the whole time of his life, are, how to live, and how to die;[1] how to live virtuously, and how to die valiantly. These two weighty questions are clearly and fully answered in this text. It declareth and delivereth such directions about life as could never be learned in the school of nature, improved to the utmost. It prepareth and provideth such a cordial against death as could never be extracted out of all the creatures distilled together. And indeed herein the excellency of the Christian religion appeareth above all religions in the world. None enjoineth such pious precepts, none subjoineth such precious promises, none sets the soul about so noble a work, none satisfieth it with such an ample reward.

The scope of the apostle in this epistle is, first, To confirm the Philippians in the faith of Christ, against the scandal of the cross; and, secondly, To exhort them to such godliness as might be answerable to the gospel.

In this first chapter, Paul encourageth them greatly to be constant in Christianity.

[1] Vivere tota vita discendum est, et quod magis fortasse miraberis, tota vita discendum est mori.—*Sen. ad Paulin*, cap. 7.

1. From the nature of God, who never doth his work by halves, but performeth what he promiseth, and perfecteth what he beginneth, ver. 6.

2. From his own prayer, which was for their increase and perseverance in grace, and that inoffensively to God's glory, ver. 9, 10.

3. From the happy fruits of his sufferings for the faith. The rod wherewith he was scourged, like Aaron's rod, blossomed. First, The gospel was the more propagated, ver. 12. The more the husbandmen were dispersed, the more the seed of the word was scattered; and the deeper the ground was ploughed, it took the better root, and brought forth the greater fruit. Secondly, The ministers of the gospel were the more emboldened, ver. 14. True zeal, like the fire, burns hottest in the coldest season; and sincerity, like the stars, though it may be hid in a warm day, yet it will be sure to shew itself in a frosty night. Thirdly, Paul himself should be much advantaged,[1] ver. 19, which latter he amplifieth by acquainting them with the reason of that hope—namely, the assistance of the Spirit of Christ, ver. 19, and the assurance God had wrought in him, from his experience of what God had done for him, that his Saviour should be honoured, and his salvation furthered, both by his life and death, ver. 20, 21.

The text, considered relatively, contains the ground why the Philippians should not be troubled so much at Paul's trials: 'For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain,' *i.e.*, If I be a gainer in all conditions, why should you be discouraged by my afflictions? If sufferings advantage the pastor, why should they dishearten the people? The children may well enjoy a calm in their spirits, when their spiritual father is safe, nay, a gainer in the greatest storm.

Take the words absolutely, and they include, first, the character of a Christian while he liveth,—'To me to live is Christ;' and, secondly, The comfort of a Christian when he dieth,—'and to die is gain.' Or you may take notice of the piety of a saint in life: 'To me to live is Christ;' and his profit by death, 'To die is gain.'

For the meaning of the words.

'To me,' ἐμοὶ. To me who am the mark at which hell and the world shoot their arrows of persecution; to me whose life hath been a ring of miseries ever since my conversion; to me who am set to undergo both men's and devils' opposition; yet to me there are spiritual and inward consolations. 'For to me to live is Christ.'

[1] Eveniunt mihi ut mihi sint salutaria.—*Trem. in Phil.* i. 19.

'To me to live is Christ,' τὸ ζῆν Χρίστος.[1] To me who am in Christ, 'to me to live is Christ.' I live not only the life of nature, but I live also the life of grace. I have not only a being from Christ as a man, but likewise a well-being in Christ as a Christian; as I did receive my life from Christ, so I do improve my life for Christ; his honour is my utmost desire, and my greatest endeavour.

'And to die is gain,' τὸ ἀποθανεῖν κερδος, *i.e.*, I have had no other object, no employment but Christ and his service in my life, shall certainly have an eternal advancement at my death.[2] Or Christ is my life here by grace, and hereafter by glory. He is both the author and the end of my life. I live for him, I live to him, I live in him, I live by him; and if I be put to death, that shall no way endamage me, but rather bring me great advantage, in regard that thereby I shall gain heaven for earth, and happy, eternal life for this miserable mortal life; so our larger annotations sense it. Some, indeed, read the words, Christ is my gain both in life and death, and therefore the apostle was little troubled at, but rather indifferent to, all conditions.[3] There is a certain truth in this exposition, though Piscator[4] will by no means grant it to be the mind of the Spirit in this place.

In the words you may see the sign of a saint, to him to live is Christ; and his solace, to him to die is gain; his holy description in the former, his happy condition in the latter.

The text being thus explained affordeth this truth, taking both parts of it together.

[1] Nam mihi vivere Christus est, *i.e.*, Tota mea vita ad hoc ordinata est, ut per meum ministerium perque meam vocationem verbis et factis promoveam pro mea virili regnum Christi. Annon hæc res bona et cuique fideli optanda?—*Zanch. in loc.*

[2] Diodati to this purpose.

[3] Atqui Christus, in utroque membro subjectum esse debet; Christus vita in vita; Christus lucrum in morte.—*Cal. in loc.* Mihi enim est Christus et in vita, et in morte lumen.—*Beza.*

[4] Sic hæc sententia non cohærebit ut ratio cum precedente, quod tamen postulat conjunctio γαρ; nam aliud est gloria Christi, aliud salus Pauli.—*Piscator in loc.*

CHAPTER II.

The doctrine, That such as have Christ for their life, gain by death, with the explication of the phrase, 'To me to live is Christ.'

That such as have Christ for their life, shall have gain by their death.

He that liveth in Christ on earth, shall live with Christ in heaven.

Where the soul hath the seed of holiness, it shall reap a harvest of happiness.

The apostle, when he summeth up the estate of a believer, counteth death as a part of his riches: 'Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death; all are yours,' 1 Cor. iii. 22, 'and ye are Christ's.' He that can say, I am Christ's, may as truly say, Death is mine. If thou canst say, I am Christ's servant, I am Christ's subject, thou mayest say, Death will be my preferment, death will be my advancement.

For the explication of this doctrine, I shall shew, first, What is meant by that phrase, 'to me to live is Christ;' and, secondly, Wherein it will appear that death to such a man is gain.

For the former, 'To me to live is Christ,' may imply these four things:

First, Christ is the principle of my life. All living creatures have an inward principle by which they live, and according to which they act. Plants have a principle of vegetation, and beasts have a principle of sense; men have a principle of reason, and their lives are different, answerable to their different principles. But a Christian hath a higher principle—that is, Christ dwelling in his heart by faith, Eph. iii. 17—and thence it is that he lives a higher life.[1] As the body liveth by its union with the soul, so the Christian liveth by his union with Jesus Christ. Christ is the fountain and spring of life, the soul of his soul, and the life of his life. 'I live,' saith the apostle, Gal. ii. 20; 'yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God.'

As the branches they live, but it is by the root; they derive sap from it, and so live by it. So the believer, he liveth spiritually;

[1] Ad vitam spiritualem quod attinet, certum est ad nos derivari exiguos quosdam rivulos, ipsum autem fontem in Christo latere.—*Daven. in Col.* iii. 3.

but it is by Christ; he deriveth the sap of grace from this true vine, and so liveth by him.

The water in the rivers doth not more depend upon the ocean, nor the light in the air upon the sun, than the life of a Christian dependeth on Jesus Christ. And therefore the Holy Ghost telleth us, 'He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son hath not life,' 1 John v. 12.

I have sometime read that the lioness bringeth forth her whelps dead, till after some time the lion roareth aloud, and then they live. This is certain, every man and woman is born dead; dead to God, dead in sins and trespasses, till this Lion of the tribe of Judah uttereth his voice, then they arise from the dead, and Christ giveth them life. When the soul, like the body of Lazarus, hath been dead so long that it stinketh and is unsavoury, when it hath been many days, nay, many years, rotting in the grave of corruption, then if Jesus Christ calleth effectually, 'Lazarus, come forth,' sinner, come forth of thy carnal, unregenerate estate; then, and not till then, the soul heareth the voice of the Son of God and liveth.

Grace is of a divine birth,[1] John iii. 3; it is the seed of God, 1 John iii. 9; an unction from the holy one, 1 John ii. 27; called dew, which is of a celestial extraction, Ps. cx. 3; and light, 1 John i. 7. The fountain of water is in the earth, but the fountain of light is in the heavens.

The web of godliness was never spun out of man's own bowels. As none can see the sun but by its own light, so none can with an eye of faith see the Sun of righteousness, but by the light of grace derived from him.

'We are his workmanship,' saith the apostle, Eph. ii. 10, 'created in Christ Jesus unto good works.' His workmanship, not only in our natural capacity as men, as creatures; and in our civil capacity as rich or poor, high or low; but also in our spiritual capacity as Christians, as new creatures.

Secondly, 'To me to live is Christ,' *i.e.*, Christ is the pattern of my life; my life is not only from him, but according to him. Christ is the rule according to which I walk, the copy after which I write. As sin and disobedience is a resemblance of the first, so grace and holiness is a resemblance of the second Adam.

True Christianity consisteth in nothing but our conformity to, and imitation of, Jesus Christ.[2] And, indeed, as the child in genera-

[1] John iii. 3, *ἄνωθεν*—Except a man be born from above. Non nascimur, sed renascimur Christiani.

[2] Sanctitas dicitur per quam mens seipsam et suos actus applicat Deo; so the schoolmen.

tion receiveth from the parent member for member, part for part; and the paper from the press, word for word, letter for letter; and the wax from the seal, figure for figure; so in regeneration Christ is formed in the soul, and it receiveth, according to its proportion, grace for grace.

One end of Christ's incarnation and life in the flesh was to set an exact pattern for our lives in the Spirit: 'He left us an example, that we should follow his steps,' 1 Peter ii. 21. All the actions of Christ are instructions to a Christian. His actions were either moral or mediatory; in both the Christian imitates him. In the former, doing as he did, exercising the same graces, performing the same duties, resisting the same temptations, forbearing the same corruptions; in the latter, by similitude, dying to sin, as he died for sin, rising to a spiritual life, as he rose again to a natural life. None indeed can parallel the life of Christ, but every new creature imitateth Christ in his life; 'he walketh as Christ walked,' 1 John ii. 6. The same mind is in all the saints, so far as they are regenerated, that was in Christ; the same will, the same affections; they love what he loveth; they loathe what he loatheth; what pleaseth him, pleaseth them; what grieveth his spirit, grieveth their spirits. As the wicked are like their father the devil, unholy as he is unholy; so the children of Christ are like their everlasting Father, holy as he is holy; only with this difference, in Christ there is a fulness, in them a measure—in Christ pureness, in them a mixture.

Thirdly, 'To me to live is Christ,' *i.e.*, Christ is the comfort of my life. Though I have many crosses, yet I have Christ for my comfort. He is the comfort of my life, and the life of all my comforts. All my joys come in at this door, all my contentments come swimming in this stream.

Piscator observeth that 'the consolation of Israel' is the periphrasis of Jesus Christ, Luke ii. 25; because all the consolation of a true Israelite, as Jacob's in Benjamin, is bound up in Christ. If he be gone, the soul goeth down to the grave with sorrow. As all the candles in a country cannot make a day—no, it must be the rising of the sun that must do it; so all the health, wealth, honours, pleasures, relations, possessions, nay, the greatest confluence of comforts that the whole creation affordeth, cannot make a day of light and gladness in the heart of a believer; no, it must be the rising of this Sun of righteousness. The light of his countenance causeth more joy than all the corn, and wine, and oil of this world can. He saith, as Luther, Christ liveth, or otherwise I would not desire

to live one moment. Or, as that noble Marquis of Vico, Their money perish with them that think all the wealth in the world worth one hour's communion with Jesus Christ.

His comfort ebbeth and floweth as Christ manifesteth himself to him, or withdraweth himself from him. Like the marigold, he openeth and shutteth with the rising and setting of this sun. When the bridegroom is taken away, the children of the bride-chamber mourn. The voice of the true dove is ever doleful in the absence of her mate. Many a long look hath this gracious soul after its absented Saviour. Many a time doth it sigh out, for lovers' hours are full of eternity, Why is his chariot so long a-coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariot? Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like the hart and roe upon the mountain of spices. It, like Zaccheus, climbs up into the sycamore tree of the ordinances, that it may have a sight of its beloved; for it heareth that he useth to pass that way; and when it spieth him afar off, for love is quick-sighted, coming towards it, hearken how the soul calleth aloud to faith to lift up the gates, to lift open the everlasting doors, that the king of glory may enter in. Desire, like Joseph, makes ready its chariot to go forth to meet this God of Jacob; and when he draweth nigh, it cometh down hastily, and receiveth him joyfully. It crieth out, with the martyr,[1] in a flame of love, He is come, he is come. Now, like Mary, it closeth with him, cleaveth to him, clingeth and claspeth about him, and thinketh it can never have enough of him, or be near enough to him. Who can express the welcome which this pious soul giveth him; what warm affection it hath to him; what complacency and delight it hath in him; what enlarged egress of spirit it hath after him? If the wise men were so glad when they saw the star that led to him, how glad is this soul in seeing this Sun! If the babe in the womb of Elisabeth sprang for joy when the mother of the Lord came to her, how doth the heart of this Christian spring with joy when the Lord of that mother comes to it! And out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, Dearest Jesus, why camest thou no sooner? why tarriest thou no longer? Sweetest Saviour, why should this meeting ever, ever part? Be thou like a bundle of myrrh, lodging all night betwixt my breasts; yet be not like a wayfaring man, to tarry with me but for a night, but do thou abide in me, and dwell with me for ever. Good Lord, how good is it to be here! Oh, how blessed are they that dwell in thy house! They ever, and not without infinite cause, praise thee. Lord, grant me this happiness, what-

[1] Mr Robert Glover, Acts and Mon., vol. iii. p. 427. Lond., an. 1641.

ever thou deniest me, that my heart may be thine everlasting home. Ah, what a holy emulation hath this saint at the spirits above, that they should have so much and he so little; that they should drink full draughts out of the rivers of pleasures, and he can only taste God to be gracious. Ah, what a heavenly vexation hath he at the necessities of his body and family here below, that they must call him away, and hinder his communion with his beloved! Oh, how willingly would this soul be separated from its dearest wife, that it might more nearly be conjoined to its dearer husband! Surely such a soul would with cheerfulness die in these embraces of Christ, breathing out, with Augustine, Lord, since no man can see thee and live, oh let me die that I may see thee.[1]

This, indeed, is the foretaste of the saints' future happiness, their morning of glory, the suburbs of the new Jerusalem, the first-fruits of their great and eternal harvest, the joy that strangers intermeddle not with, Prov. xiv. 10. It may better be conceived and felt, than described or expressed;[2] and therefore is most fitly by the apostle called joy unspeakable and glorious, 1 Pet. i. 8. Thus Christ is the comfort of a Christian.

Fourthly, 'To me to live is Christ,' that is, Christ is the end of my life. Christ is both the author and the end of my life; as my life is from Christ, so my life is for Christ. The great care of the apostle was to magnify Christ, both by his life and death, Phil. i. 20. All the gain I aim at, both in life and death, is Christ, namely, to glorify him by my service.[3]

According to the principles of a man, such are his end. He that acteth from self, acteth for self. That obedience which ariseth from the creature, will be terminated in the creature.[4] Solomon saith, Eccles. i. 7, 'All the rivers run into the sea;' unto the place from whence the rivers came, thither they return again; so the life of a Christian coming from Christ, must necessarily tend to Christ. A sincere saint doth not, like the hypocrite, look asquint at self-applause, self-profit, and such beggarly ends, but his eyes look straight on at the glory of Jesus Christ. If Christ be glorified, though he be disgraced, he is satisfied. When Christ hath honoured the soul by giving it grace, the soul honoureth Christ by giving him glory. Grace is the most curious work, and therefore no wonder if it be for the credit of the workman. Trees bear fruit for the owner, Cant. iv. 16. Of him and through him

[1] Aug. on those words, Moriar Domine ut te videam.
[2] Verba non valent exprimere, experimento opus est.
[3] Larg. Annot. [4] Operari sequitur esse.

are all things, therefore to him be glory for ever and ever, Rom. xi. 36.

It is confessed the flesh will propound other ends, but the spirit carrieth the vote. As some write of the heavenly orbs, that they have a proper motion of their own, different from the motion of the *primum mobile*, yet in obedience to this first mover, they follow its motion; thus it is with the unregenerate part of a man; it hath proper ends of its own, pride, and flesh-pleasing, and the like, contrary to the ends of the spirit; but in obedience to the regenerate part, the Christian leaveth the former ends, and follows the ends of the latter.

The honour of Christ is exceeding dear to a true Christian. It is dearer than his name. Lord, saith a father, use me for thy shield, to keep off those wounds of dishonour which would fall on thy Majesty.[1] Let the reproaches wherewith they would reproach thee fall upon me. And Luther is called a devil, saith Luther, in an epistle to Spalatinus; but be it so. So long as Christ is magnified I am well apaid.[2] Nay, the honour of Christ is dearer than life to a believer. Paul, as one saith of him, stood a-tiptoe to see which way he might glorify Christ most, whether by life or death. 'Neither count I my life dear unto me, so I may finish the ministry I have received of the Lord Jesus,' Acts xx. 24.

CHAPTER III.

What privative gain the Christian hath by death.

I come now to the second thing promised, and that is, to manifest wherein the Christian that hath Christ for the principle, pattern, comfort, and end of his life, shall be a gainer by death. And truly, reader, in speaking of this gain, I shall acknowledge myself at an unspeakable loss. When I have spoken my utmost, I must entreat the reader, as once Cicero[3] did his, when he spake of Socrates and Lucius Crassus, *Ut magis quiddam de iis quam quæ scripta sunt suspicarentur:* That they should imagine some far greater matter than they find written. Though my tongue were as the pen of a ready writer, it could never express it, and if my pen were as the tongue of a ready speaker, it could never describe

[1] Bonum est mihi, si Deus me uti pro clypeo dignetur.—*Bern.*

[2] Prorsus Satan et Lutherus, sed vivit et regnat Christus. Amen.

[3] Cic. iii., De Orat.

it. The land of Canaan, notwithstanding all the helps we have, is still for the most part *terra incognita*, an unknown land. The sights there are light, inaccessible as to mortal eyes, 1 Tim. vi. 16; and the sounds there are words not audible as to mortal ears, 2 Cor. xii. 4; words which may not, or cannot be uttered, or both.[1]

One being asked what God was, answered that he must be God himself before he could know God fully. I am sure it is requisite that that Christian should be in heaven first who would know heaven fully. Fame, which in other things is too free and prodigal, in this is too sparing and penurious, and that in so great a degree that, reader, after thou hast heard it set forth by the holiest, heavenliest man alive, though of the greatest capacity and oratory, yet if ever thou gettest thither, thou wilt find cause to speak, as the queen of Sheba did in another case, 1 Kings x. 6, 7, 'It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy glory and thine excellency. Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it; and, behold, the half was not told me: the delight and happiness exceedeth the fame which I heard.' There it is indeed that God doth more for the believer than he is able to ask or think. As the loss of the damned will be beyond the most melancholy man's fear, so the gain of the saved will be above the strongest Christian's faith. The eye of a man may see much good, the ear of a man may hear more, the heart of a man may conceive most of all; but yet neither hath 'eye seen, nor ear heard, nor can it enter into the heart of man to conceive, what God hath prepared for them that love him,' 1 Cor. ii. 9. They which have written most of this subject, might have added at the end of their books, as in other treatises some have done, *Desiderantur nonnulla*, or *plurima desunt;* More is desired, or more is wanting. It is as easy, saith one, to compass the heavens with a span, to contain the ocean in a nutshell, as to relate heaven's happiness.

Reader, I shall speak to this subject but briefly. Set the Holy Land before thee, as it is in a map, in a little room, yet by what I shall speak in this place, and in the last use, as the spies by the clusters of grapes, thou mayest gather, the land is good, it floweth with milk and honey, and this is some of the fruit of it, Num. xiii. 27.

The Christian's gain by death will appear in these two particulars: He shall gain a freedom from all evil, the fruition of all good; and is not this man a gainer?

[1] Ἄρρητα ῥήματα, *i.e.*, quod fando explicari a quopiam homine non potest; Beza. et Eras. ita exponunt.

First, He shall by death be freed from all evil.[1] The immediate and full presence of the chiefest good which the believer shall enjoy after death will cause the absence of all evil. The influences of that sun will scatter every mist, and disperse all clouds which now darken the conditions of pious souls. The day of a Christian's dissolution will be the day of his redemption, Luke xxi. 28. This may be the reason why the apostle placeth redemption last, saith an expositor: 1 Cor. i. 30, Now we have Christ made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, but then redemption. When the saint is passed through the red sea of death, and landed at the true Canaan, he shall then see all his bodily and spiritual enemies dead on the shore. In the middle region there are storms and tempests, and so here below; but above, all is calm and quiet. While the Christian is upon earth, evils, like Job's messengers, follow him, one upon the heels of another; but when he leaveth the earth, every evil will take its eternal leave of him.

There are two evils, which are indeed the only evils, though the first is by much the worst: the evil of sin, or defilement, and the evil of suffering, or chastisement. Now a believer by death should be freed from both these.

First, From the evil of sin; and in this take notice, that death will deliver the Christian both from the commission of it, and from all suggestions tending to it.

First, Death will free the saint from the commission of sin. In hell there is nothing but wickedness, in heaven there is nothing but holiness. The unregenerate man is never so wicked as after death: now sin is in its minority, then it will be in its maturity; now it is but the sinner's evening, but then it will be a perfect night of blackness, of darkness. The godly man is never so holy as after death: grace is now in its infancy, then it will attain to its full age; now it is as the morning light, then it will attain to its noonday brightness. Sin is now by a spiritual life mortified, that it doth not reign; but then by death it shall be nullified, that it shall not so much as remain in a believer.

The ungodly after death shall be perfectly like the devil, (the Indians, some write, have a conceit that death will transform them into the ugly shape of the devil; and therefore in their language they have the same word for a dead man and a devil,) and the godly after death shall be perfectly like God.

They are now partakers of the divine nature, and so like him, yet how much unlike him! but when they shall see him in heaven,

[1] Ademptio omnium malorum.

then they shall be like him indeed, 1 John iii. 2.[1] Vision causeth an assimilation in nature, Gen. xxx. 37, 38; in grace, 2 Cor. iii. 18; so here in glory.

The schoolmen put the question, how the angels and souls of men in heaven come to be impeccable, or without sin? and answer that it is by the beatifical vision.[2] The apostle seemeth to intimate as much in the fore-quoted place: 'When he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' As the pearl, by the often beating of the sunbeams upon it, becomes radiant; so the Christian, being ever beheld by the Lord, and always beholding the face of his Father in heaven, shall be more like him than ever child was to father on earth. Then that profession of Christ will be abundantly verified, 'Behold, thou art fair my love; behold, thou art fair. Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee,' Cant. iv. 1, 7. Then the end of Christ's passion shall be fully attained, when he shall present to himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, Eph. v. 27; not only in regard of imputed righteousness, or justification, but also in regard of imparted righteousness, or sanctification.

Here the heart of a Christian is like Rebekah's womb—it hath twins struggling in it; the appearance of the church is, as it were, the company of two armies, Cant. vi. 13; the old man and the new man, flesh and spirit, the law in the members warring against the law of the mind. As there was war betwixt Asa and Baasha all their days, so there is betwixt the regenerate and unregenerate part all the time of this life; but this gracious conflict shall then end in a glorious conquest, when the death of the body shall quite destroy this body of death. Sin in the heart is like the leprosy in the house, which would not out till the house was pulled down, Lev. xiv. 44, 45. But when soul and body shall be parted for a time, sin and the soul shall be separated to eternity.

And as the heart, so the life of a Christian is like a book which hath many *errata* in it; and therefore *Legendus cum venia.* The whitest swan hath her black feet; the best gold must have its grains of allowance: 'There is no man that liveth upon earth, and sinneth not,' Eccles. vii. 20. All of us offend in many things, and many of us in all things,[3] James iii. 2. 'Our righteousness is as a

[1] Pet. Martyr tells us of a deformed woman, married to an uncomely man, that by looking much on beautiful pictures, brought forth lovely children.—*Loc. Com.* pars. i. cap. 6.

[2] Visio beatifica impotentes reddit ad peccandum.

[3] Omne opus justi damnabitur si judicio Dei judicetur.—*Luth. in Alfert.*

filthy rag,' Isa. lxiv. 6. Our graces not without their defects: 'Lord, I believe; help mine unbelief,' Mark ix. 24. Our duties not without their defaults: 'When I would do good, evil is present with me,' Rom. vii. 21. The purest fire hath some smoke, the richest wine some dregs, but death will turn sin out of all its holds, and leave it not so much as a being in the Christian. The bodies of men have usually a mighty shoot at death; but oh what a shoot will the soul of a saint have, when it shall be carried by angels to the place where the spirits of just men are made perfect! Heb. xii. 23.

Secondly, The soul alive in Christ, shall be freed at death from all temptations to sin. Then a Christian shall be above the reach of all Satan's batteries; then that promise will be performed, that the God of peace will tread Satan under the saints' feet, Rom. xvi. 20. Now Peter is winnowed, Paul is buffeted, David is stirred by the wicked one to number the people; if Joshua be ministering unto the Lord, Satan will be at his right hand to resist him, Zech. iii. 1. It is no small unhappiness to a saint, that he is here followed with unwearied assaults, that the prince of darkness is restless in casting in his fire-balls, to put the soul into a hellish flame; though he should never be conquered, yet for the Christian to have his quarters beaten up night and day, must needs disquiet him. To have blasphemous thoughts of a God infinitely great and gracious, to have mean and vile apprehensions of a Saviour incomparably precious, cast into him, though he close not with them, cannot but wound him to the heart; as for a chaste matron that loatheth the thoughts of dishonesty, to be continually solicited to folly, is a sore vexation. The temptations of our Lord Jesus were a sad part of his humiliation.

But death will ease the soul of this trouble: as in heaven there shall be no tinder of a corrupt heart to take, so no devil like steel and flint to strike fire. The crooked serpent could wind himself into the terrestrial, but shall never creep into the celestial paradise. His circuit is to go to and fro in the earth, he cannot enter the confines of heaven; when he fell from his state of integrity, he left that place of felicity, and cannot possibly recover it again. The saints on earth indeed are militant, fighting with him, but the saints in heaven are all triumphant, wholly above him: 'More than conquerors, through him that loveth them,' Rom. viii. 37. There the children of God are gathered together, and no Satan among them; there the Son of David delivereth his true Israelites from all their fears of this uncircumcised Philistine. When the heavenly Mordecai comes to be a chief favourite in that high and holy court, he

shall be freed from all his frights about this enemy and adversary, this wicked Haman.

The ark and Dagon could not stand together in one house, much less can light and darkness, Michael and the dragon, God and the devil, dwell together in one heaven.

If Ireland, as some write, be so pure a soil, that it will not nourish any venomous creature, I am sure heaven is so pure, that into it can in no wise enter anything that defileth, Rev. xxi. 27; it will not harbour those poisonous serpents.

Heaven once, saith an author, spued them out, and it will not return to its vomit, or lick them up again; no such dirty dog shall ever trample on that golden pavement. There is such a cursed irreconcileable contrariety in their natures, to the blessed company and exercises in heaven, that certainly they cannot desire, much less delight in that place; if the presence of Christ were such a torment to them in his estate of humiliation, what a torment would it be in his estate of exaltation! It is observable they left their own habitation, Jude 6; the word seemeth to imply, that when they lost their primitive purity, they willingly lost that habitation of spiritual pleasures. But whether he will or no, he shall be banished those coasts; though he now dog the saint at, and disturb him in, every duty, he shall do it no more: 'The accuser of the brethren shall be cast down, neither shall his place be found any more in heaven,' Rev. xii. 8, 9.

Secondly, A Christian by death shall not only be freed from the evil of sin and defilement, but also from the evil of suffering and chastisement: the cause being taken away, the effects will cease.[1] Sin is that great-bellied mother, or rather monster, which conceiveth and bringeth forth all those losses, crosses, diseases, disgraces, sorrows, and sufferings whatsoever, that befall the children of men. Though man may be the butt, yet sin is the mark at which the arrows of divine displeasure are shot; man weaves a spider's web of sin out of his own bowels, and then is entangled in it. Wickedness alone is the original cause of all woe, Lam. iii. 39; Rom. vi. 23. But now, at the death of a saint, the fountain of sin will be dried up, and therefore the streams of sufferings must be dried up also. The fuel being taken away, the fire will go out of itself; sin and sorrow were born, do live, and shall die together.

As sin is the original cause of all, so it is the final cause of most, afflictions. Sometimes they are for probation—as we shoot at good armour that we may prove it, and that we praise it—but most

[1] Sublata causa, tollitur effectus.

commonly they are for purgation, to amend something that is amiss: the fathers of the flesh chastise for their pleasure, but the Father of spirits for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness, Heb. xii. 6. The quiet fruits of righteousness blossom from the correcting rod; bitter aloes purge the worms; winds and thunder clear the air; frosts and showers whiten cloth; the husbandman useth the flail to separate the chaff, and the refiner the fire to consume the dross. But when the wheat shall be clean, there will be no need of the flail; when the gold pure, no use of the fire. 'Now,' saith the apostle, 'if need be, ye are in heaviness,' 1 Pet. i. 6. Mark, now, if need be; now men have hard knots, and therefore need sharp wedges; now men have strong corruptions, and therefore need strong corrections; now the rod is as necessary as our daily bread. Chastisements are to teach men in God's law, Ps. xciv. 12; to search and heal their spiritual sores. But now at death the scholar in Christ's school will have perfectly learned his lesson, and therefore there will be no need of a rod: then the wounds of the soul will be perfectly cured, and these plasters will fall off of themselves. Death will make him whole that he can sin no more; and so no worse or so bad thing shall come to him.

There are three evils of affliction which I shall mention:

The first on the name.

The second on the body.

The third on the soul.

From all which a believer shall be freed by death.

First, Death will free the saint from ignominy on his name. Here, if the world cannot make the Christian wound his conscience, they will be sure to wound his credit. Elijah is counted the troubler of Israel; Nehemiah a rebel against the king; David the song of the drunkards and the scorn of the gluttons, Ps. lxix. 12, and xxxv. 16; Isaiah and his children for signs and wonders, Isa. viii. 18; Jeremiah is a man of contention, Jer. xv. 10; the Son of man a wine-bibber and a glutton; Paul a pestilent fellow and a mover of sedition, Acts xxiv. 5. The uprightest saint is marked for a hypocrite in the world's calendar. If they cannot smite him with their hands—their arms are not long enough always—they will not fail to smite him with their tongues. What a precise fool, say they, is such a fellow; he dares not take up his cups as we do; but could we see his heart, it is as bad as the worst of ours. He will do as bad or worse when nobody seeth him; he will not swear, but he will lie, I 'll warrant you. He spendeth his time in nothing but going to sermons and meetings, and is as arrant a dissembler

as liveth. Such a one of the same society was guilty of such a sin, and they are all alike: these are your professors! Thus the corruption of their hearts break out at their lips, and they most wretchedly wound even Christ through the sides of the Christian.

But heaven will not only wipe away all tears from the Christian's eyes, but also all blots off from his name. Upright Hezekiah in heaven is above the sound of cursed Rabshakeh's tongue, which was set on fire of hell. Now holy David is got up that heavenly hill, that mount Zion, he heareth not the railings and revilings of sinful Shimei. The most spiteful scorner of them all cannot throw that dirt so high with which he bespatters the saints' reputation here below.

Secondly, As death will free the Christian from ignominy in his name, so likewise from infirmities in his body. Diseases cause death, but death will cure all diseases! In this life Job had his botches, Hezekiah his boil, David his wounds and sores, the poor widow her issue of blood; one man wasteth away with a consumption, like a candle, till all the matter is spent; another laboureth under a continual ache, that, like the importunate widow, will give him no rest day nor night; this man spends his days in pain, that man hath wearisome nights appointed to him. In some the bridle is taken off the fire, and they burn with a fever; in others the flood-gate is taken up from the water, and they are like to be drowned with a dropsy. The patient man complaineth, 'My breath is corrupt, my days are extinct, the grave is ready for me,' Job xvii. 1. The upright man crieth out, 'My wounds stink and are corrupt; my loins are filled with a loathsome disease.' In one, the keepers of the house tremble with a palsy or lameness; in a second, the sound of grinders is low through weakness; in a third, those that look out of the windows are darkened through blindness; in a fourth, the daughters of music are brought down with deafness. Oh what an army, not only of moral, but natural adversaries, hath every man in his own bowels, constantly set in array against him, marching up, sometimes one, sometimes another, as the Lord of hosts giveth the word of command. Physicians tell us that two thousand diseases annoy man's body, whereof two hundred affect the eyes; so that indeed man's body is a spital, or an hospital, for diseases. But death will help all this. As the blind man told the lame, when they met at the stake, Brother, you may cast away your staff, death will cure us both. The physician of souls will by death heal all the diseases of the saints' bodies. There are some diseases which are called *opprobria medici*,

because they cannot cure them; but none are *opprobria Christi*—he healeth all whom he undertaketh. If the higher a house standeth on earth, it be esteemed the healthier, surely then the highest heavens must be a pure air and all health, Rev. xxi. 4: there shall be no more death, nor any more pain, for the former things are passed away. So that every Christian that dieth in the faith, how diseased soever he were before, shall then immediately, as in the Gospel, be made every whit whole, John vii. 23.

Thirdly, As death will free the believer from diseases in his body, so also from sorrows in his soul. The Christian liveth upon earth as in a valley of tears, and often mingleth his drink with weeping. As he is a man, he is born to sorrows as the sparks fly upward: he cometh into the world crying, and goeth out groaning; and his whole life from the womb to the tomb is in some regard a living death, or a dying life. But as he is a Christian, he drinketh deepest of this cup of sorrows. The world is a tender mother to her children, but a stepmother to strangers. Sometimes the afflictions of the good cause high water in the saint's heart: by the rivers of Babylon he sits down and weepeth when he remembereth Zion, Ps. cxxxvii. 1. He cannot but sympathise with the miseries of his fellow-members, as being himself in the body. He is not as a wooden leg, senseless of the other members' sufferings. Sometimes the transgressions of the bad clothe him with mourning: like Crœsus' son, though dumb before, yet he crieth out when his father is wounded. 'As with a sword they pierce his bones, when they blasphemously say unto him, Where is thy God?' Ps. xlii. 10. 'Rivers of tears run down his eyes, because the wicked forsake God's law,' Ps. cxix. 136. Sometimes his own corruptions, like so many daggers, stab him to the heart, that he should abuse such an ocean of unspeakable love by so unsuitable a heart and so unanswerable a life. He confesseth his iniquities, and is sorry for his sins, Ps. xxxviii. 18. Sometimes divine desertions darken and cloud all his comforts: 'When God hides his face, he is troubled,' Ps. xxx. 7. As there are no joys like to those joys wherewith God reviveth him in the day of his favour, so there is no sorrow like to those sorrows wherewith God depressed him in the day of his anger. Thus his life is a circle of sorrows; but death will be the funeral of his sorrows and resurrection of his joys: now he soweth in tears, but then he shall reap in joy. The day of death is a saint's marriage-day. Samson's wife indeed wept on her wedding-day, Judges xiv. 16; but when the soul, which in this life is contracted, shall at death be solemnly espoused, and more nearly

conjoined unto Jesus Christ, 'all tears shall be wiped from its eyes; there shall be no more sorrow,' Rev. xxi. 4. At that marriage-day Christ will turn all water into wine, all mourning into mirth, all sighing into singing, and cause the bones which he hath broken to rejoice. Now the saints' sorrows are not perfect sorrows, *non dantur purœ tenebrœ* to the believer—it shineth and showereth at the same time. He sorroweth not as they which have no hope; but his joy at death shall be perfect joy, fulness of joy, Ps. xvi. 11, and permanent joy; when they shall see Christ at death, their hearts shall rejoice, and their joy shall no man take from them, John xvi. 22. 'Then the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away,' Isa. xxxv. 10.

So much for the privative gain of a Christian by death, or his freedom from evil.

CHAPTER IV.

What positive gain a Christian hath by death.

There is a second thing, which is positive; and that is the fruition of all good, which a believer shall gain by death, and in this head I shall observe these three gradations:[1]

First, A believer, by death, shall gain the company of perfect Christians. Death will exempt him from all commerce with sinners, and teach him fully the meaning of that article, the communion of saints. In the field of this world the tares and the wheat grow together, but in that heavenly garner they are parted asunder. There is no treacherous Judas among the apostles; no covetous Demas among the disciples; no Amorites to be pricks in the eyes and thorns in the sides of the Israelite; no bestial Sodomite to vex righteous Lot with their unclean conversation; no flattering Doeg sets his foot in that heavenly sanctuary. David doth not there complain, 'Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar! my soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace,' Ps. cxx. 4, 5; nor Isaiah, that he dwelleth among a people of unclean lips, Isa. vi. 5; nor Elijah, that he is left alone. Hell holdeth none but sinners, and heaven hath only saints. He that dieth in the Lord goeth to the congregation of the first-born, 'to the

[1] Adeptio omnium bonorum.

spirits of just men made perfect,' Heb. xii. 23. And questionless the sweet company will be part of our felicity. If Platinus the philosopher could say, Let us make haste to our country, there are our parents, there are all our friends; and if Cicero[1] the orator could say, Oh what a brave day will that be when I shall go to the counsel and company of happy souls, to my Cato, and other Roman worthies! How much better will it be with the Christian, when he shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; when he shall leave the rout and rabble of wicked ones, and be admitted into the society of all that died in the faith, and be joyfully welcomed by the melodious choir of angels, and be heartily embraced by the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, yea, all the saints! Surely if ever that proverb were true, it is here, The more the merrier. The fair streams there will never be drawn dry, though it be divided into many channels; the music there is not the less harmonious, because many hear it; nor the light of the Sun of righteousness the less pleasant, because many see it; and oh what a gain will this be, to enjoy the company of them that are holy! If Aaron, when he met Moses on earth, was glad at his heart, certainly there was greater joy at their meeting in heaven. If David placed all his delight, Ps. xvi. 3, in the saints here below, when they shined a little, with the light of purity, like the moon, and had their spots in them, what delight doth he take in them above, now they have perfect purity, and shine like the sun in the firmament of their Father! Mat. xiii. 43. If it were so lovely a sight to see Solomon in his rags of mortality, that the queen of Sheba came so far to behold it, what will it be to see him in his robes of glory!

I remember I have sometimes heard an able holy minister,[2] now with Christ, say, that that sight of five hundred saints, and Jesus Christ among them, 1 Cor. xv. 6, was one of the bravest, goodliest sights that ever eyes beheld on earth. Sure I am they that are in heaven see a far better, beholding Jesus Christ in the midst of many thousands.

Secondly, A Christian shall gain by death the nearest communion with the Lord Jesus Christ; and oh what happiness is included in this head! The presence of Christ on earth can make a mean cottage a most delightful court: to the three children it

[1] O præclarum diem, cum ad illud animorum concilium cœtumque proficiscar.—*Cic. de Senec.*

[2] Mr Thomas Wilson, minister of Maidstone, in Kent, an eminent servant of the Lord Jesus.

turned the fiery furnace into a delectable palace; what will it do then in heaven? Bernard saith [1] he had rather be in his chimney-corner with Christ, than in heaven without Christ. Luther saith he had rather be in hell with Christ, than in heaven without Christ. Communion with Christ can sweeten the bitterest condition. Christ alone is the salt which seasons all the saint's comforts, without which nothing is savoury to the spiritual taste. A duty without Christ is like a body without a soul, which hath neither loveliness nor life in it. Communion with Christ is one great motive which enticeth the saint to, and encourageth him in, the ordinances of God. He attendeth on Scriptures because they are they that testify of Christ; the pearl of price is hid in that field; in them the lips of Christ, like lilies, drop sweet-smelling myrrh, Cant. v. 13; and oh how his heart burneth within him with love to Christ, whilst Christ is opening to him the Scriptures! He frequenteth prayer, because therein Christ and his soul converse together; in that ordinance he enjoyeth much of Christ's quickening presence; he speaketh to Christ by holy supplications, and Christ to him by heavenly consolations: he mindeth fasting, because therein his soul may with Jesus Christ have a spiritual feast; or the greatest cause of his weeping is, with Mary, 'They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.' The means of grace are therefore so desirable and delightful, because they are the galleries wherein he walketh, talketh, feedeth, and feasteth with the Lord of glory.

The highest duty without Christ, is as a dish without meat, from which he goeth as empty and unsatisfied as he came to it. It is to him as Tully's Hortensius to Augustine, of little worth if the name of Jesus be not there.

If he love the saints with a love of complacency, it is because they are Christ's seed; if he love the sinner with a love of pity, it is for Christ's sake. His affections are contracted or enlarged towards anything, as it hath less or more relation to Christ; and nothing is of true value or worth in his esteem which hath not *aliquid Christi*, something of Christ in it.

Now consider, reader, if the presence of Christ be so precious, so pleasant to the Christian here, when he can see so little of his excellent beauty, and receive so little of his infinite bounty, what will it be when he shall appear to the soul in all his royalty, and fill the water-pots of the soul up to the brim with the riches of grace and glory.

[1] Mallem in cumino meo cum Christo quam in cœlo sine Christo. —*Bern.*

Demarathus of Corinth saith, they lost the chief part of their life's happiness that did not see Alexander sit on the throne of Darius. If that were such a happy sight, what a sight shall the saints have to see Christ on his Father's throne! Oh how much is included in these few words, 'to be with Christ,' which is the description of the saint's gain by death! Phil. i. 23. This was the great legacy and portion which Christ bequeathed his in his last will and testament: John xvii. 24, 'Father, I will that those which thou hast given me be with me where I am.' This was the great promise and sweetmeats which the tender Father provided to comfort his fainting children with at his own funeral: John xvi. 22, 'I will see you again, and your hearts shall rejoice.' This was the great prayer which Paul maketh for his beloved Timothy: 2 Tim. iv. 22, 'The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit.' This was the enlivening cordial which the good physician administered to the dying patient: Luke xxiii. 43, 'This day thou shalt be with me in paradise.' This is the great reason for which the godly long for death: Phil. i. 23, 'I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.' I desire death, saith Melanchthon,[1] that I may enjoy the desirable sight of Christ. And oh when will that blessed hour come! when shall I be dissolved? when shall I be with Christ? said holy Mr Robert Bolton on his deathbed. Surely, then, this gain is great which the saint shall have by death. He that hath Christ with him by grace, may say with Peter, 'Master, it is good to be here;' but he that is with Christ in glory, may say with Paul, 'To be with Christ is far better;' without doubt best of all. They were blessed which saw him in his estate of debasement, Luke x. 23, but much more blessed will they be that shall see him in his estate of advancement.

Thirdly, The saint by death, shall gain the full and immediate fruition of God. The former were excellent; but this, as the sun among the planets, surpasseth them all. The other were as rivers, this is the ocean. They were as branches bearing goodly fruit, but this is the root upon which they grow. They all as lines meet in this centre; this is the top-stone of the celestial building, this is the highest stair, the apex of the saints' happiness. This is the greatest gift which the creature can possibly ask, or the infinite God bestow. The boundless God cannot give a greater mercy than this. Is anything, yea, are all things in heaven and earth equal to God? God alone is the highest object of faith, 1 Pet. i. 21, and therefore the greatest ground of joy and satisfaction to the soul,

[1] Ut desiderato fruar conspectu Christi.

Ps. xvii. 15. The vision of God is the beatifical vision, 1 John iii. 3, and therefore the fruition of God will cause perfection in the soul. The enjoyment of God is the great desire and delight of the saints on earth, Ps. xlii. 1, 2; nay, it is the happiness of the human nature of the Lord Jesus, Ps. xvi. 5, 6. Without question then it will be the heaven of heavens. That excellent description of heaven mentioned by the apostle, 1 Thes. iv. 17, is a being ever with the Lord. This is all. The most fluent tongue must be here silent, and the most capacious understanding will be soon at a stand, in the consideration of the felicity which floweth from the fruition of God. *Loquimur de Deo non quantum debemus, sed quantum possumus.* In speaking of God we speak not what we ought, but what we are able, said Gratianus the emperor in his epistle to Ambrose.

The presence of this King will make the court indeed. For the Lord to be with us is our chiefest security: 'Though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me,' Ps. xxiii. 4. But for us to be with the Lord, will be our chiefest felicity: 'In his presence is fulness of joy; at his right hand are pleasures for evermore,' Ps. xvi. 11. God is not wealth, or honour, or comfort, or friends, or earth, or heaven, but something infinitely beyond all these. God is an immense ocean of all excellencies and perfections, without either banks or bottom. God is virtually, eminently everything, all things.[1] As in the wars between Charles the Fifth and Francis the First, king of France, when the emperor's herald had bid defiance to the king, from Charles, emperor of Germany, king of Castile, Leon, Arragon, and Naples, archduke of Austria, with the rest of his titles, the king commanded the heralds to return the challenge from Francis, king of France, commanding them to repeat France as many times as the other had petty earldoms in his style, intimating that one France was worth them all;[2] so truly one God answereth all things. He is health and strength, riches and relations, joy and pleasures, light and life, and much more, all the excellencies scattered and shadowed in the creature, are united and realised in the Creator, who is blessed for ever. One God is worth more than all his creatures can sum up in millions of ages.

This is the gain of a saint by death, he shall gain the fruition of God. He who hath lost God, hath nothing more to lose—he hath lost all; the loss of God is hell, 2 Thes. i. 9. But he that hath

[1] Solus tu es jucunditas; totus mundus est amaritudine plenus.—*Aug. in Ps.* lxxxv.
[2] Heil. Geogr.

gained God, hath nothing more to gain—he hath got all; the gain of God is heaven.

It is worthy our observation, that Job, speaking of God, Job xiii. 16, saith, 'He shall be my salvation.' An expositor[1] observeth on that text, Job doth not say, He shall give me salvation, but 'He shall be my salvation.' It more pleaseth a saint that he enjoyeth God than that he enjoyeth salvation. As nothing that a godly man giveth God will content him, unless he give God himself, so nothing which God giveth a godly man will satisfy him, unless God giveth himself to him.[2] His voice is *Non tua, sed te, Domine;* Lord, not thine, but thee. He is better pleased that God is his salvation, than that he saved him. Whom have I in heaven but thee, saith he. There are saints, angels, archangels, saith Musculus, but in the presence of this glorious sun those stars must vanish and disappear. What are saints, what are angels without God? And it is true of things as well as persons: What is the glory, what the pleasures, what the joys of heaven without God? What is all the robes and riches, what is all the crowns and comforts, what is all the delights, the delicates, the diadems of heaven, without the God of heaven, but as the funeral banquet for some eminent prince, where is large provision and great cost, but no cheer? No, it is God alone that is the centre to which the saint moveth, and in which he resteth.

Oh what happiness shall the holy man have at death, to be ever with God! If that queen could say of Solomon's attendants, 'Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom,' 1 Kings x. 8. How happy are they that dwell in God's mansion-house, ever beholding his face, and hearing his voice! It is reported of Eudoxius, that he was so extremely desirous to be near the natural sun, that he might see it, and know its nature, that he professed, so he might obtain his desire, though but for one hour, he would willingly be burnt up by it the next hour. How much worth then is the sight and knowledge of this Sun of righteousness; and what gainers are they by death, that come thereby to see him as he is, and to know him, as they are known of him, 1 John iii. 2; 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

But the Christian shall not barely enjoy God after death, for that he doth in this life, but he shall enjoy God fully. Now the saints enjoy a little of God, and oh how refreshing is it to his weary soul! But then he shall have as much of God as his heart

[1] Car. *in loc.*

[2] Fecisti nos propter te, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te.—*Aug. Confes.*, lib. i. cap. 1. Ps. lxxiii. 24.

can wish or hold. In this life there is a communication of God, answerable to the capacities of men; and the fault is in us, not in God, that we receive no more of him on earth. The ground is not in the sun, but in the narrowness of our windows, that we partake no more of its light; the cause is in the smallness of our vessels, not in the well, that we carry away no more of its water. If our mouths were never so wide opened, God would fill them now. But then the windows of the soul shall be widened, and the vessels of the heart enlarged, and so fitted for, and filled with, a greater participation of God. There is not the least complaint of want; all the patriarchs' sacks are there filled with corn. There David's cup runneth over indeed; there the holy Ephesians are filled with all the fulness of God. In that Father's house there is bread enough, and to spare, for all his children. There is given to all good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, Luke vi. 38.

We say there is no fishing like to the sea, because the sea hath the greatest plenty, and the vastest capacity; there are fish enough to fill all our nets, and lade all our ships. I may more truly say, there is no fruition like to the fruition of God. He hath enough not only to supply all our indigencies, and to satisfy all our necessities and desires, but he can do abundantly for us, above what we are able to ask or think, Eph. iii. 20. God hath enough to fill himself, as boundless a being as he is; surely then he hath enough to fill the limited soul of man. That which can fill the ocean, may well fill a spoon.

Now a Christian is described by his hungering and thirsting, his panting and breathing after a perfect conformity to God, that thereby he may be prepared for perfect communion with God; but blessed are they which now thus hunger and thirst, for then they shall be filled, Mat. v. 6. Well filled, as beasts are after a good bait, as the word used by our Saviour signifies.[1] He that drinketh of that water which God shall there give him shall thirst no more. That God, who filleth the bellies of his enemies on earth with the hidden treasures of common bounty, will surely fill the souls of his children in heaven with the precious treasures of special mercy. The soul, that now sippeth of the water of life, shall then drink a full draught out of the rivers of God's pleasures. The Christian, who can now only taste God to be gracious, shall then have a full meal, when he shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. 'They are

[1] χορταθήσονται, hoc proprie dicitur de armentis; nam χόρτον prati vocant gramen aut pabulum.

before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters,' Rev. vii. 15–17.

Observe, reader, I say a Christian shall gain by death a full immediate fruition of God. Now the saint drinketh the waters of life, and they are pleasant, though through the conduits and cisterns of ordinances; but with what joy will he draw water immediately out of the well of salvation.[1] We read in Joshua v. 12, when Israel came to Canaan manna ceased, and they did eat of the fruits of the land. While the saint is in the wilderness of this world, he needeth, and feedeth on the manna of the word, sacraments, prayer, and the like; but when death shall land him at that place, of which Canaan was but a type, the manna of ordinances shall cease, he shall eat the fruits of that land. Ordinances are necessary for, and suitable to, our state of imperfection. Jacob drove his flocks as they were able to go, so doth Christ his sheep.

Here we are in a state of uncleanness, and therefore want water in baptism to wash us, saith an eminent divine; in a state of darkness, and therefore want the light of the word to direct us; in a state of weariness, and therefore want a Lord's-day of rest to refresh us; in a state of weakness, and therefore want bread in the supper to strengthen us; in a state of sorrow, and therefore want wine to comfort us; in a state of beggary, and therefore want prayer to fetch some spiritual alms from the beautiful gate of God's temple.

Whilst the saint is as a child, he thinks as a child, speaks as a child, understands as a child; but when he shall come to be a perfect man, he shall put away these childish things. When every earthly member shall be mortified, and the body of death wholly destroyed, when the faculties of the soul shall be enlarged, and the sanctification of the inner man perfected, when the rags of mortality shall be put off, and grace swallowed up in glory, the sun shall be no more thy light by day, nor the moon thy light by night, but the Lord thy God, thine everlasting light, and thy God thy glory, Isa. lx. 19.

Apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, are for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ, no longer than till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the

[1] Dulcius ex ipso fonte, &c.

Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, Eph. iv. 11–13. When God shall be all in all, then, and not till then, ordinances will be nothing at all. When the saint comes to his journey's end, he may throw away his staff. Now, how much will this add to the former, that the Christian shall without ordinances enjoy God! How lovely is the face of God, though it be but in the glass of the gospel! 2 Cor. iii. 18. This was the one thing which David begged, that he might dwell in the house of the Lord, to see the beauty of his face, Ps. xxvii. 4. Ah how lovely will he be, when the Christian shall see him face to face! 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

If it be so good to draw near to God on earth, Ps. lxxiii. 28, and if they are blessed that watch at wisdom's gates, and wait at the posts of her doors, Prov. viii. 34, how good will it be to draw near to God in heaven; and how blessed are they that wait not at the door, but dwell in that house!

How pleasant will it be for the soul, when its eyes shall be strengthened to see God as he is, without the spectacles of ordinances. We esteem that honey sweetest that is sucked immediately out of the comb, though honey out of a dish is sweet; and we do with more delight eat that fruit which we gather ourselves from the tree, than we do that which is brought to us through other hands. The enjoyment of God is so sweet in the dish of a duty, that a Christian would sooner lose the best friend he hath than it. But oh how sweet will it be in the comb of immediate communion! This fruit is very delightful and pleasant as it is conveyed through the hands of ministers, (though the liquor will scent of the cask,) but oh with what delight, (Christian, canst thou read it and thy heart not warm with joy?) with what pleasure wilt thou with thine own hands gather this fruit from the tree of life, that standeth in the midst of paradise! Rev. xxii. 2.

Thus I have given thee a little of that great gain which a saint hath by death; death will free him from all evil, both of sin and suffering; it will give him the fruition of all good, in the enjoyment of perfect saints, and the blessed Saviour, and in full immediate communion with the infinite God, who is blessed, and blessing his for ever. This is the heritage of a righteous man from God, and this is the portion of his cup: thus shall it be done to the man whom the King of Heaven delights to honour. There is but one thing more required to make the Christian perfectly happy, and that is the eternity of all this; but I shall speak to that in the last use. I now proceed to the application of the point.

CHAPTER V.

The difference betwixt a sinner and a saint at death.

The first use which I shall make of this doctrine shall be by way of information. If such as have Christ for their life shall have gain by their death, it informeth us of the difference betwixt the death of the sinner and the saint: the one is an unspeakable gainer, the other an inconceivable loser by death. Death to the good is the gate through which they go into the kingdom of heaven; death to the bad is the trap-door through which they fall into hell. The godly dieth as well as the wicked; but the wicked man dieth not so well as the godly. The metal and the dross go both into the fire; but the metal is refined, and the dross consumed. As the cloud in the wilderness had a light side to the Israelite, but a dark side to the Egyptian: so death hath nothing but light and comfort for the Israel of God; nothing but darkness and sorrow for the sinful Egyptians. Death to every one is a messenger sent from the Lord of life; it cometh to the regenerate, as the young prophet to Jehu, 'I have an errand to thee, O captain.' And what was his errand? He poured the oil on his head, saying, 'Thus saith the Lord, I have anointed thee king over Israel,' 2 Kings ix. 5, 6. It is a messenger from God, to call the Christian to a kingdom which cannot be shaken. But it cometh to the unregenerate, as Ehud to Eglon: 'And Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee.' And what was his message? Judges iii. 20, 21, 'And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into Eglon's belly.' It is a messenger from God, with a mortal, wounding, killing, stabbing message to a sinner. The pale white horse of death rides before, and the red fiery horse of hell follows after.

The people of God pass safely through the red sea of death, which his enemies assaying to do are drowned—are damned.

There is a great disagreement in the lives of the holy and unholy; but oh what a vast difference is there in their deaths! they are like two parallel lines; how far soever they go together, they never touch in a point. Their ways differ, and therefore their ends must necessarily differ. Every man's end is virtually in his way; their ways differ as much as light and darkness, and therefore their ends must differ as far as heaven and hell. The one walketh in

his own ways, Prov. xiv. 14; in the ways of his own heart, Eccles. xi. 9; in the broad way of the flesh and the world, Mat. vii. 13; and so his end is damnation, Phil. iii. 19; his latter end is, that he shall be destroyed for ever, Num. xxiv. 20. The other walketh in the way of the Lord, Ps. cxix. 1; in the way of his testimonies, ver. 14; in the narrow way of self-denial, mortification, and crucifying the flesh, Mat. vii. 14; and so his end is peace,[1] Ps. xxxvii. 37. Such as the seed is sown, such is the crop which is reaped. The unregenerate man soweth to the flesh, and of the flesh reapeth corruption; the sanctified soul soweth to the spirit, and of the spirit reapeth life everlasting, Gal. vi. 6, 7.

The blind world, indeed, as it seeth not their difference in life, (the life of a saint is a hidden life; Col. iii. 3, 'Our life is hid with Christ in God.' The king's daughter is all glorious, but it is within, Ps. xlv. 13; the jewels of her graces are laid up in that privy drawer, the hidden man of the heart,) so it beholdeth not the difference in their death. As dieth the wise man, so dieth the fool, to the eye of sense, and they want the eye of faith, Eccles. ii. 16. We see no difference, say they, betwixt the death of them you call profane, and your precise ones; they die both alike to our judgments.

But this conceit, reader, if thou art such an atheist, proceedeth from thy blindness and unbelief. Thou art probably in the chamber when a drunkard, a swearer, or a civil, moral, yet unsanctified neighbour departeth this life; thou seest his body trembling, panting, groaning, dying; but thou dost not see the ten thousand times worse condition his poor soul is in. Thou seest his kindred or relations weeping; but thou dost not see the infernal spirits rejoicing; thou dost not see the greedy devils that waited by the bedside, like so many roaring lions, for their desired and deserved prey; thou dost not see when the soul left the body how it was immediately seized on by those frightful hell-hounds in a most hideous, horrible manner, and hauled to the place of intolerable and eternal torments; thou dost not see the shoutings of those legions in hell, at the coming in of a new prisoner, to bear a part in the undergoing of divine fury, in their blasphemies against heaven's majesty, and in their estate of hopelessness and desperation.

Men, saith a modern writer, like silly fishes, see one another caught, and jerked out of the pond of life; but they see not, alas! the fire and pain into which they are cast who die in their sins.

[1] Fine discernuntur improbi ab electis.—*Moller. in Ps.* xxxvii.

Oh, it had been better surely for such if they had never been born, as Christ said of Judas, than to be brought forth to the murderer (that old man-slayer) to be hurled into hell, there to suffer such things as they shall never be able to avoid, or abide.

On the other side, thou standest by a scorned, persecuted saint, when he is bidding adieu to a sinful world; thou seest the strugglings and droopings of his outward man, but thou seest not the reviving cordial the physician of souls is preparing for his inward man; thou dost not see those glorious angels which watch and wait upon this heaven-born soul.

That waggon or chariot, which the son of Joseph sendeth to fetch his relation to a true Goshen, the inheritance of the saints in light, is as invisible to thee, as those chariots of fire on the mountain were to the servant of the prophet. Never Roman emperor rode in such a chariot of triumph, as the saint doth to heaven. When the soul biddeth the body good-night, till the morning of the resurrection, thou dost not see those ministering spirits, sent down for the good of this heir of salvation, presently solacing and saluting it. Thou dost not see how stately it is attended, how safely conducted, how gladly received into the bosom of Abraham, into the father's house, into that city, whose builder and maker is God. Thou dost not see the soul putting off, with the clothing of the body, all sin and misery, and putting on the white linen of the saints, even perfect purity, matchless joy, and eternal felicity. When thou canst see these things with the eye of faith, thou wilt easily grant a vast difference between the death of the gracious and graceless.

Reader, if thou art dead in thy sins, and unacquainted with this spiritual life, which I have before described, nothing of that endless gain which the godly shall enjoy at death belongs to thee; none of that fulness of joy, of those rivers of pleasures, of that eternal weight of glory, shalt thou partake of. I may say to thee, as Simon Peter to Simon Magus, 'Thou hast no part nor lot in this matter, for thine heart is not right in the sight of God.' Thou mayest, like the madman at Athens, lay claim to all the vessels that come into the haven; but the vessels of the promises, richly laden with the treasures of grace and love, do not at all appertain to thee. If, like a dog, thou snatchest at the children's bread, thou art more bold than welcome, and wilt one day be well beaten for thy presumption. If thou art unregenerate, and so diest, look to thyself, for thy lot must fall on this side the promised land.

Thou mayest, like a surveyor of land, take a view of another's

manor, and bring a return, how stately the house is, how pleasant the gardens, how delightful the walks, how fruitful the pastures, how finely it is seated, how fully it is wooded, how sweetly it is watered, how fitly it is every way accommodated; but as long as the pronoun is wanting, it can be but little comfort, it is none of thine.

So thou mayest read and hear much of that comfort, joy, and richness of that incomparable kingdom, which the holy shall immediately upon their deaths enter into; but what is all this to thee, when thou must be without it for ever? Thou mayest see Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom, but between him and thee there will be a great gulf.

As a stranger, thou mayest hear the last will and testament of Christ read, and therein the fair, rich, and large portions which he hath bequeathed to his children, John xvii. 24; Luke xii. 32, but not the least mention made of any good for thee. Look from the beginning of Genesis, to the end of the Revelation, and see if there be one good word spoken to thee, whilst thou art in thy natural estate. Moses-like, thou mayest, by the prospective of scripture, have a Pisgah sight of Palestine, of that good land flowing with milk and honey; but, as God is true, if thou diest in unregeneracy, thou shalt never enjoy one foot of it.

The worst of a saint is past when he dieth, but thy worst, O sinner, is to come. There are some dregs in the bottom which thou art yet to drink down. Thou hast thy good things here, and he his evil things; but at death he is comforted, and thou art tormented. He hath all his hell upon earth, his heaven is to come; thou hast all thy heaven on earth, and thy hell is to come when thou passest into another world. The hell of a saint is an easy hell; but ah, how hot is that hell in hell, how fiery is that furnace, how terrible those torments! I may conceive somewhat, the damned feel most, but no tongue can express them.

But it may be, friend, thou art one that thrivest in this world, and therefore dost not trouble thy head, much less thy heart, with the things of another world. Thou art unwilling to put a spoonful of those thoughts into thy sauce, lest it should make thy meat unsavoury: it would mar thy mirth and spoil thy sports. As Sigismund the emperor did not love the pronunciation of the Greek Zeta, because it represented the gnashing teeth of a dying man; so thou art resolved to banish such enemies, as thou thinkest, out of thy coasts, and, like a bear, to go down that steep hill of death backward.

But know thou, O man, that whether thou wilt consider of thy death beforehand or no, it is hastening upon thee. Though thou puttest it far from thee, whether thou wilt or no, it draweth nigh to thee. The ship moveth not so fast in the waters, nor the sun in the heavens, as thou art hastening towards thy long, thine everlasting home, and then death will bring thee up a reckoning for all thy sweet morsels, merry-meetings, time and talents whatsoever. Believe it, then, thou wilt have sour sauce for all thy sweetmeats; thy presumption will prove but like Haman's banquet before execution.

What advantage, then, will thy sunshiny morning of common mercies bring thee, when, as on Sodom, it will be followed with flakes of fire and brimstone before night? Dost thou not know, that when the wicked flourish, it is that they may be destroyed for ever? Ps. xcii. 7. The higher thou ascendest on this ladder, the greater thy fall when death turneth thee off. Thou art but ripening for ruin, and fatting on earth to fry in hell, all the while thou art flourishing in a course of sinning; nay, thou mayest be much nearer hell than thou art aware of.

The metal, when it shineth brightest in the fire, is nearest melting. Thou, like a candle, mayest give a blaze when thou art going out of the world, into blackness of darkness for ever. The hawk flieth high, and is as highly prized, being set upon a perch, and set out with the jingling bells of encouragement, and carried on his master's fist; but being once dead, and pitched over the perch, is cast upon the dunghill as good for nothing. The hen scrapes in the dust, nothing rewarded while she liveth, but being dead, is brought as a choice dish to her master's table. Thus wicked men in this life are set in high places, godly men lie grovelling with their mouths in the dust; but being dead, the former is cast into hell, the latter brought to heaven's table.

But that I may awaken thy conscience, O secure sinner, and make thee look about thee, whilst there is time and hope, if the gracious and powerful God please to assist, I shall give thee an estimate of the sinner's losses by death, by which thou mayest see what a difference there is between the death of the titular and the real Christian.

And here, reader, thou mayest help me with thy conceptions, for I shall come infinitely short in my expressions. As none can endure it, so none can declare it; for who knoweth the power of God's wrath? Ps. xc. 11.

The orator, when he would describe the violent death of the

cross, doth it by an aposiopesis: What, saith he, shall I say of the death of the cross?[1] Much more cause have I to speak so of this death, What shall I say of this eternal death?

CHAPTER VI.

The sinner's privative misery at death.

By death thou shalt lose all thy earthly delights and carnal contentments. The table of thy life possibly is richly spread with variety of outward enjoyments, riches, relations, honours, pleasures, beauty, and bravery; but death will come in with a voider, and take all away. It is called an unclothing, 2 Cor. v. 4, and indeed it will strip thee naked of all such garments and ornaments. Thine eye shall no more see good, Job vii. 7; *i.e.*, the good things of this life, they will all die with thee, as to thy use and comfort. It is a doleful expression of Abraham to Dives, Thou hadst, or thou receivedst, thy good things in thy lifetime, Luke xvi. 25. Oh what a cutting word was that to his heart, when he was passed into another world, Remember there was a time when thou and they were joined together, but now ye are parted for ever. To have been happy was no small aggravation of his misery.[2] It is with thee, while in this world, as it was with the Jews, in the vineyards and fields of their neighbours, pluck and eat they might, while there, but pocket up, and carry away, they might not, Deut. xxiii. 24, 25.

Death is the great thief which will rob thee of thy riches. The wealthiest emperor, the next moment after death, hath no more than the poorest beggar. As thou camest forth of thy mother's womb, naked thou shalt return, to go as thou camest, and shalt take nothing in thy hand of all thy labour, Eccles. v. 15. That gold which thou lovest, and trustest more than God, these pebbles which thou valuest above the pearl of price, that treasure on earth, which thy heart is set upon more than on the true treasure in heaven, will all leave thee when death findeth thee. Mr Rogers, in his Treatise of Love, tells us of one, that being nigh death, clapped a twenty shilling piece in his mouth, saying, Some wiser than some, I will take this with me, however; but alas! poor fool, he could not be so good as his word. The Holy Ghost excellently

[1] Quid dicam in crucem tollere.—*Tull.*

[2] Miserum est fuisse felicem.

termeth rich men, rich in this world, because riches will not make men rich in another world, 1 Tim. vi. 17.

Death will seal a lease of ejectment, and turn thee out of all thy possessions; and death will give thee a bill of divorce, and separate thee from all thy relations. The relations of husband and wife, parents and children, are calculated only for the meridian of this world, and shall not outlive this life. Thy dear husband, or thy loving wife, and thy most dutiful children, will all serve thee as Orpah did Ruth, chap. i. 14, follow thee while thou art full, but forsake thee when thou art empty; cleave to thee in thy health and life, but leave thee in thy greatest danger at death. And thy birth and breeding, honour and respect, will serve thee in the like kind; they are but a shadow, which will not be seen when the sun of thy life is set. The great distinctions in the other world will be holy or unholy, not noble or ignoble.

'Be not afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased; for when he dieth he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not descend after him,' Ps. xlix. 16, 17. Death is the great leveller, making princes and peasants equal.[1]

All thy sinful pleasures will also be lost. The sweet taste thou foundest in thy mouth will be gone, though they will rise in thy stomach, and after in thy belly be more bitter than gall. Thy merry meetings, jovial companions, witty jests, sporting, recreations, pictures for thine eyes, music for thine ears, dainties for thy taste, thine eating and drinking, and all these delights on earth, which thou solacest thy sensual soul with, desiring no other heaven, will all, like leaves in the autumn of thy death, fall off from thee. Though in the short summer of thy life thou art richly laden with them, yet in thy long, thine everlasting winter, thou shalt be stripped naked of them.

Thou mayest say to all the forementioned delights of riches, relations, honours, and pleasures, and whatever it is which thou foolishly rejoicest in, as Charles the Fifth, emperor of Germany, whom the world counted most happy, did to his trophies, treasures, and things of the like nature, *Abite hinc, abite longe*, Be gone, get you far out of my sight. Be assured, that as a false harlot leaves her lovers when they are arrested for debt, and followeth other customers, so this painted strumpet, the deceitful world, that now layeth open her fair breasts, to allure thee to go a-whoring after her, and commit spiritual fornication with her, when death shall arrest thee by a writ from heaven, will wholly forsake thee, and follow them that survive. Now, what a loss will this be!

[1] Mors sceptra legionibus æquat.

But it may be thou comfortest thyself against this, that all, even good as well as bad, will join with thee in this loss. But, reader, dost thou not consider, that they who enjoy the stars all night, and come in the morning instead thereof to enjoy the glorious sun, are no losers; the sun hath all the light of the stars, and far more. Neither can the godly be properly called losers of these comforts, because they enjoy them all, and infinitely more, in the blessed God: 'As money answereth all things,' Eccles. x. 19. Money is equivalently sheep, oxen, corn, meat, drink, cloth; whatsoever you want in this life is virtually in money. So God to a gracious soul after death will answer all things; he will be eminently and virtually father, mother, wife, child, wealth, honour, pleasure, and all things; though he loseth them here, he will find them there, and much more; but when thou, O sinner, losest them in this world, they shall never be made up to thee in another world. Thou losest not only the streams, but the fountain; not only the beams, but the sun; and therefore thy portion will be scorching drought and dismal darkness. Besides, these things are not the portion, the all, of a good man; they are not his estate or inheritance, they are but an additional overplus, cast in over and above. So much the words of Christ imply, Mat. vi. 33, 'And all other things shall be added to you.' As when a father giveth his son a thousand pounds worth of ware, he casteth in paper and pack-thread; or one thousand yards of cloth, he doth not stand upon the breadth of the thumb which is to be allowed in measuring. So God, having given himself and his Son to his saints out of his vast bounty, casteth in the creatures as an overplus; they are not their estate, or portion, or all. No; when a godly man, at the great and terrible day of the Lord Jesus, shall see his house, and land, and outward good things in that common flame which shall burn up the earth, he may then behold it with comfort, and say with the philosopher, I have my all still.[1]

But, sinner, thy loss of them will be a loss indeed; for these things are thy all—they are all thy God, and all thy Christ, and all thy happiness, and all thy heaven; they are all the fulness of joy, and all the rivers of pleasures, and all the weight of glory which thou shalt enjoy; they are all thy riches, all thine inheritance, all thy consolation, all thy reward, all thy portion, and all thou shalt be worth for ever. Look Luke xvi. 24. They have received their consolation, (cold comfort, indeed,) ye have your reward,[2] Mat. vi. 2. It is one of the saddest speeches in the book of God,

[1] Omnia mea mecum perto.—*Pias.*;

[2] ἀπέχουσι, they receive it as their full pay, whence ἀποχὴ an acquittance.

'whose portion is in this life,' Ps. xvii. 14. Ah! poor portion. Thou hast no other paradise but thy garden, no other mansion but thy beautiful building, no other inheritance but thy land, no other kindred but thy wife and children, no other honour but the stinking breath of thy flattering neighbours, no other God but thy gold, no other heaven but the earth; all thy estate is in dust, rubbish, and lumber; surely, then, it will be a loss with a witness to lose all that in a moment, and that for ever, wherein all thy happiness consisteth. Will it not be a sad sight for thee to stand, as it were, upon the shore, and to see the vessel in which is embarked all thy treasures, all thy near and dear relations, all thy respect and esteem, all thy joy and delights, sinking before thine eyes, and lost for ever? or to see that house, in which is thy plate and jewels, thy wife and children, and all that ever thou art to be worth, in a flame, and nothing possible to be recovered; would not thine eyes affect thine heart with unspeakable horror? Now this, O reader, will be thy case if thou art unsanctified at death. When thou liest upon thy death-bed, and art going out of the world, thou mayest take thy leave of thy friends, estate, honour, and delights in such language as this: Farewell, my dear wife, children, and all my friends; farewell for ever. I am going where lovers and friends will be put far from me; I must never, never have any friend more, but shall remain friendless to all eternity. Farewell my house and land, my silver and gold; farewell for ever. I shall from henceforth and for ever be a beggar, and though I beg but for one drop of water to cool my tongue, when this whole body shall be in unquenchable flames, I must everlastingly be denied. Farewell my honours and delights; farewell for ever. I shall never more be respected or comforted; confusion of face and easeless pains are to be my endless and unchangeable portion. Thus, man, thou wilt most miserably even outlive thy felicity, and when thou comest to live indeed, *i.e.*, in the other world, want all thy comforts and joys.

Thou shalt lose by death all thy spiritual preferment. It is now no mean mercy to thee, hadst thou a heart to prize and improve it, that thou enjoyest the ordinances of God, the means of grace, many golden seasons for the good of thy soul; that thou mayest sit at God's feet, and hear his voice out of Scripture, fall down on thy knees and seek his face by prayer; but know to thy sorrow, death will rob thee of all these jewels. Now thou hast the tenders of mercy, the entreaties of the minister, the motions of the Spirit, the invitations of Christ, liberty to cast thyself down at the footstool of heaven's Majesty, and to be as fervent and instant as thou wilt for

mercy, but then the gate will be shut, and there will be no praying, or hearing, or preaching, in the place whither thou art going: Ps. lxxxviii. 11, 'Shall thy loving-kindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in destruction?' The interrogation is a strong negation. There is no preaching of God's clemency or fidelity either in the grave or hell. All the lectures read in the former are by worms, of man's mortality; and all the sermons heard in the latter are of man's misery and God's severity. Reader, I assure thee from the living God, that though in this life thou art now and then bungling about a duty, and giving God thy stinking breath, a few cold, lazy petitions, which proceed from thy corrupt lungs, thy cursed heart, thou shalt do so no more after death. As the saints shall be above this mediate enjoyment of God, so thou shalt be below it. And truly, hadst thou ever had communion with God in a duty, this loss would go near thee. How amiable is the worshipping of God to a gracious soul! he prizeth ordinances, because they are the means of it in this world, above his estate, and food, or whatever is dear to him, Ps. cxix. 14, 72, 111; Job xxiii. 12; Ps. lxxxiv. 1–3. And this privilege he shall have by death, to be employed still about the same work of pleasing, glorifying, worshipping, and enjoying God; only he shall do it in a more excellent and more delightful way.

He continueth, as it were, in the same school; death only removes him to a higher form, or, if you will, death sends him from the school, in which he was fitted and prepared, to the university of heaven. But, O sinner, thou must be deprived of this happiness; indeed, now thou esteemest the ordinances of God a burden; as precious as they are to others, they are tedious to thee. The church is thy jail, the Sabbath is thy ague-day, the commands of Christ are bonds and fetters to thee, Ps. lxxii. 3. The voice of thy carnal heart is, When will the glass be out? when will the duty be done? when will the Sabbath be over, that thou mayest follow the world? Amos viii. 5. Thou thinkest the prayer is too long, the sermon is too long, the Sabbath is too long, the duties are all too long; well, be patient but a little, a short time, and thou shalt never be troubled with these long duties more. The night is coming when there is no working, John ix. 4. There is no enjoying Sabbath, or sacraments, or seasons of grace; no wisdom, knowledge, or device, in the grave to which thou art hastening, Eccles. ix. 10.

Now the minister exhorteth thee to cast away thy sins, and come to thy Saviour, to reject thy soul-damning lusts, and accept of a soul-saving Lord. The Father commandeth thee by his sovereignty

over thee, and propriety in thee as thy Creator. The Son entreateth thee by presenting his bloody sweat and sufferings unto thee, as he is thy Redeemer. The Spirit stirreth thee to pity thy precious soul, and to mind thine unchangeable estate; to consider seriously in this day of God's patience the things which concern thy eternal peace. The gospel is a treasure of inestimable value, freely offered thee, upon condition thou wilt but heartily embrace it and the easy yoke of Christ together. The word of God chargeth, inviteth allureth, beseecheth, promiseth, threateneth; all these, like so many trumpets, do loudly sound a retreat, to call thee off from thy slavery to the world and flesh unto the glorious liberty of the sons of God; but thou art as deaf as the adder, and will not hear the voice of these heavenly charms; as hard as the rock—the waves of threatenings which dash unweariedly against thee stir thee not; the showers and dews of promises which fall on thee continually make no impression; neither mercies nor judgments, neither men nor God, can prevail with thee. Well, sinner, think of it again and again—and thy heart is hardened with a witness if it do not tremble to think of it—the hour is approaching when thou shalt never have these tenders, these invitations, these means, these motions more; though thou shalt earnestly and incessantly desire them, and willingly accept of them if they could be granted thee, after thou hast fried as many millions of years in hell as there are stars in the heavens, piles of grass on the earth, and sands on the sea-shore, yet thy entreaty upon such a hard condition shall be denied. Then thou wilt befool thyself to purpose for staying till the day after the fair, for not accepting when thou wast well offered; then mercy will be mercy indeed, then grace will be grace indeed, then the gospel will be glad tidings indeed, when by the want of them thou shalt fully know the worth of them.

Now God holdeth the candle of his word to thee, and instead of working, thou playest. Instead of working out thy own salvation, instead of working the works of him that sent thee into the world, thou playest the fool, the drunkard, the beast, the hypocrite, the atheist; well, thou shalt go into utter darkness, where those lights which thou now enjoyest will never shine.

Plutarch observeth of Hannibal, He might once have taken Rome, and would not; afterwards he would, and could not. Now God offereth thee heaven, thou choosest earth; and notwithstanding he assureth thee that now is the only acceptable time, now is the only day of salvation, yet thou wilt not hear when he calleth. I tell thee the day is near when thou wouldst, but God will not; when

thou shalt call, but he will not hear; and then thou shalt find no place for repentance, though, Esau-like, thou seek it carefully with tears. When once thy particular judgment is passed, it will be in vain to beg a psalm of mercy, Heb. ix. 27.

Thou shalt at death lose the society of all the godly, even of those excellent ones, in whom is the delight of Christ, Prov. viii. 31, and all the delight of Christians, Ps. xvi. 3. It is a blessing to thee upon earth, did the Lord but sanctify it to thee, that thy lot is cast in a land, in a parish, in a family, where those holy ones are, that thou mayest hear their gracious prayers, see their pious patterns, and enjoy their precious precepts. A saint is, as the proverb is in Africa, A man whose coming is prosperous. This churlish Laban could confess, Gen. xxx. 27, and the heathenish Egyptian found by experience, Gen. xxxix. 2. All the country fareth the better for a good and rich Christian; he eateth not his morsels alone, but keepeth open house for all comers.

He both desireth and endeavoureth that others might be not almost, but altogether as he is. None are more spiritually covetous to make proselytes than the true Israelites. As the wall which receiveth heat from the sun reflecteth it on the passengers, so he wisheth so well to the worst, that they were made partakers of the same grace, that they may have fellowship with the Father, and Jesus Christ his Son, 1 John i. 3. Like the bee, he goeth to this and that flower, to this and that ordinance, and sucketh some sweetness, some spiritual good, and carrieth all home to his house, to his hive. As sin is diffusive,—'a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump,' 1 Cor. v. 6. Some say, they that have the plague are very desirous to infect others;—so is grace, like oil spreading, the gracious desire to go to an innumerable company of angels with a numerous company of saints.

Their examples are amiable, and sometimes instrumental for the conversion of others, 1 Peter iii. 1; 1 Cor. vii. 16. Justin Martyr confesseth of himself, that beholding the saints' piety in life, and patience at death, he gathered their doctrine to be the truth, and was converted. Their prayers are desirable, and that in the esteem of profane and ungodly men, Exod. viii. 28, and ix. 28; Acts viii. 24.

In a word, the saints are clouds which water the earth, Heb. xii.; the salt which keepeth the world from putrefaction, Mat. vi. That place, Prov. x. 25, 'But the righteous is an everlasting foundation,' the Hebrews expound, the righteous are the foundation of the world, which but for their sakes would soon shatter and fall to ruin. 'I

bear up the pillars thereof,' saith David, Ps. lxxv. 3. It is for the sake of the good that the bad are spared, Acts xxvii. 24. All that sailed with Paul were saved for his sake.[1] How many a time have they stood in the gap, and diverted a flood of wrath from breaking in! Ps. cvi. 30; Num. xiv. 20. How many a mercy hath come flying to the world upon the wings of their prayers!

But, O sinners, herein will be a part of thy misery, that thou shalt for ever be banished their company. Now possibly thou thinkest the parish the worse for such strict inhabitants, thy dwelling the worse for such precise neighbours, thy family the worse for such a humble, zealous wife, child, or servant. Now thou dost not know what thou gainest when thou hast their society, but thou shalt know what thou losest when thou hast lost them to eternity.

If Cicero did so bewail his banishment from the Roman moralists, that though the countries through which he travelled did him much honour, yet he would often look towards Italy with sighs and tears;[2] and if the disciples wept so much for the loss of Paul—they fell about his neck, and kissed him, and wept, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more in this world, Acts xx. 37, 38—how wilt thou sigh and sob, weep and wail, when thou shalt be parted from them in the other world!

Did the devout men make such great lamentation for the loss of one good man for a little time, Acts viii. 2, what lamentation shalt thou make for the loss of all good men to eternity! Surely, as in Ramah, there will be a voice heard, lamentation, weeping, and mourning, for the loss of these children of God.

When thou diest, thou shalt lose all thy hope, or presumption rather. Thy dead hope, for saints only have a lively hope, 1 Peter i. 3, will fail thee at death. As thou hast no true holiness, so thou canst have no true hope; but something it is likely thou hast, upon which thou reliest as to thy future estate. It may be thou hast the good things of this life, and thence concludest thy right to a better life; as if because the great housekeeper of the world throweth some bones to the dogs, therefore he must love them with a paternal love. Thou dost not consider, their houses may be full of gold whose hearts are empty of grace, and whose souls shall assuredly come short of glory, Job xxii. 17, 18; Ps. xvii. 13, 14.

It may be it is thy profession of religion that holds thee up by

[1] Sanctum semen statumen terræ, Isa. vi. 13. Absque stationibus non staret mundus.

[2] Plut. in Vit.

the chin, and keepeth thee from sinking; as if, because a stage-player is dressed in the robes, and for a quarter of an hour acteth the part of a king, he must therefore have a real right to the dignity, dominions, and revenues of the regal office, not believing that these colours of the form which are not laid in oil, in the power of godliness, will be washed off at death, Mat. xxv. 8. Or it is likely thou enjoyest the privileges of the gospel; Sabbaths, sacraments, and the seasons of grace are the bladders, with the help of which, without an inward change, thou thinkest to swim to heaven. Dost thou not know that many go to hell-fire with font-water on their faces, and from the table to the tormentor? Mat. xxii. 13; that Esau, a castaway, and Ishmael, an outcast, had both Abraham to their father? And so had they whom truth itself assureth, that they were of their father the devil, John viii. 44. 'Circumcision availeth nothing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature,' Gal. vi. 15. All such things are but lying words, where an internal work of grace is wanting, Jer. vii. 4–6.

Or possibly thou art a man of many performances; thou mindest secret, family, relation duties, which too too many neglect, praying, reading, hearing, Christian communion. Like the spider, thou weavest a curious web out of thine own bowels, and therewith makest thee a house in which thou restest quietly; but, O friend, God hath a besom of death which will sweep this down, Job viii. 14, 15. This, and all the rest, as nigh as they seem to be to heaven, will prove but a castle in the air. Whether any, or all these, or something else, be the pillars by which thy hope is upheld in life, they will fail thee at death; and then the rotten props being taken away, the house of thy hope will fall. These are all but a sandy foundation, and therefore when that great storm comes, they will down to the ground, Mat. vii. 26, 27.

It is possible thou mayest hope all the time thou livest, but thy life and hope will depart together. Like thy neighbours, thou mayest be full of hope even when thou art going into the pit of despair, and die in peace, though thou art going unto the place of eternal war; but the next moment after death, thy hopes will take wings and fly away: Prov. xi. 7, 'When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish; and the hope of unjust men perisheth.' He died perhaps with his head full of hopes and expectations, as those seemed to have done that came bouncing at heaven's gate with, 'Lord, Lord, open to us;' but soon were their hearts filled with desperation when they heard, 'Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, I know you not.' *Etiam spes valentissima periit*, as some

read that forecited place: his great hope shall be little worth. A false heart and false hope can never hold out in such a real hardship: Job xxvii. 8, 'What is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God shall take away his soul?' An expositor glosseth on it thus: The anchor of a wicked man's hope entereth not within the veil, as a godly man's doth, closing with God himself in Christ, Heb. vi. 19, which anchor in all storms is sure and steadfast, but is cast upon false and loose ground, and therefore, when the storm comes, his anchor drives, and is unsteadfast; and so his hope and heart fail together. The stoutest unregenerate man alive will droop at last when God cometh to take away his soul; then his crest falls, and his plumes flag: 'The wicked is driven away in his wickedness,' Prov. xiv. 32.

He being arrested by death as a cruel serjeant, in the devil's name, is hurried away, and hurried into hell. As syrens are said to sing curiously while they live, but to roar horribly when they die; so thou that art high in hope on earth, wilt be the lower in grief in hell, when thou shalt see all thy hopes, like Absalom's mule, to fail thee in thy greatest extremity.

We say, If it were not for hope the heart would break; what wilt thou do then, when thy hope shall depart, and thy heart continue?

How sad will thy condition be, when thou shalt fall from the high pinnacle of thy presumption into the bottomless gulf of desperation! Surely thy raised expectation disappointed will prove a sore vexation. How extremely wilt thou be perplexed, when thou shalt fall as low as hell, whose hopes were raised as high as heaven! If hope deferred make the heart sick, Prov. xiii. 12, then hope of such happiness wholly frustrated will kill it with a thousand deaths.

When a gracious man dieth, his hope is perfected in the fruition of all, and ten thousand times more, than he hoped for. When a graceless man dieth, his hope perisheth in an utter disappointment of all that he, though with little reason, so much expected.[1]

Thou shalt lose by death thy precious soul. This will be a loss indeed. The price of this pearl is not known to thee on earth, but it will be fully known in hell. This one head, reader, didst thou but understand what is included in it, would stab thee to the heart, and the thought of this one loss would be enough to embitter the comforts of thy whole life. The soul of man is called the man, Job iv. 19—though not in a natural, yet in a moral, consideration, saith one

[1] Improbi, dum spirant, sperant: justus, etiam cum expirat, sperat.

upon that place, it being the most noble, the most excellent part of man;[1] and it is usual to denominate the whole from the better part. The body is but a house of clay, its foundation is in the earth; but the soul, the inhabitant of this house, is of an angelical, spiritual nature. The generation of this was from heaven, Zech. xii. 1.

The operations of this are most noble; the redemption of this cost the blood of God, Ps. xxxi. 5; Acts xx. 28. This is that part of man which is capable of the image of his Maker, Col. iii. 10; Eph. iv. 24. The working out the salvation of this is the whole of a saint's care and labour, Phil. ii. 14. It is upon the welfare of this that the body dependeth for its unchangeable estate. What a loss then will the loss of this be!

A heathen can tell us that it is an easy matter to bear the loss of an earthly house for our bodies when we die; but certainly it will be hard to bear the want of a heavenly habitation for thy soul. Let him that bought this ware speak to its worth and thy loss: 'What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?' Mat. xvi. 26. Behold what an incomparable, what an irreparable, loss is here! It is such a loss there is none like it. The gain of the whole world cannot balance the loss of one soul. If a temporal life be more worth than meat, and the body than raiment, what is an immortal, eternal soul worth? Couldst thou set thy soul to sale for all the world, yet for that thou wouldst be a loser, nay, as the rich man, a beggar. This is an irrecoverable loss. If thou losest one eye, thou hast another; if thou losest one limb, thou hast more; if thou losest thy estate, thou mayest recover it again; if thou losest thy life, thou mayest be a gainer by it, thou mayest find it again, Mat. xvi. 25; but if thou losest thy soul at death, thou hast no more; there is no second throw to be cast, no after-game to be played; thou art gone, thou art undone for ever. Here is a loss, man, that may make thy hair stand an-end; thy head, yea, thy heart, to ache when thou readest or thinkest of it. Do not thine ears tingle and thy loins tremble to hear of it?

When God would smite the rich fool under the fifth rib, as it were, and strike him so home as that there need not a second thrust, he doth it in those words, 'Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee,' Luke xii. 20. Ah sad sentence! wherein every word speaketh woe, every syllable sorrow and sighs. Had it

[1] Quia anima est principalior pars hominis, unumquodque autem consuevit appellari id quod in eo est principalius.—*Aquin. in Job* iv. 19.

been, Thou wise man, the message might have been welcome, and death desirable as a passage to eternal life; but it is 'Thou fool.' Had it been this year, or this month, nay, had it been this week, the man might have been forewarned and forearmed; but it is, 'This night thy soul shall be required of thee.' Had it been, This night thy riches shall be required of thee, how harsh would it have sounded in his ears, who had no other god but his gold; who, like a mole, lived in the earth as his element! Oh how hard would it be to part this covetous muck-worm and his mammon of unrighteousness; but it is not thy silver, but thy soul shall be required of thee. Had it been, This night thy relations shall be required of thee, thy wife and children, and all thy kindred, shall be required of thee, what heavy tidings would it have been to his heart, that had no kindred in heaven! with what wringing of hands, and watering of cheeks, and sighs and sobs, would such news have been entertained! Many an eye would a tender husband and father have cast upon his loving wife and lovely babes, and oh how would his eye have affected his heart with grief and sorrow, to consider that these thriving, hopeful plants must be removed into another soil, that this near conjugal knot must be untied, and he and his dear relations, who had so often and so much rejoiced together, so suddenly be separated, and that for ever! But it is not thy wife that is one flesh with thee, but thy spouse that is a spirit within thee: 'Thy soul shall be required of thee.' Had it been, This night all the means of grace shall be required of thee, it had been worse than the loss of a limb to him that had any spiritual life. The ordinances of God to a soul, are as the sun to the world, without which, notwithstanding all his earthly delights, it would be but a place of darkness and of the shadow of death, Mat. iv. 16; but it is thy soul. The former might have spoken the man's condition very dangerous, but this speaks it altogether desperate, 'Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.' The former, although sad, are yet nothing to this, not so much as the noise of a pop-gun to the noise of a cannon. This is the great ordnance which includes, and yet drowns, those smaller pieces.

Couldst thou, saith one,[1] upon the forecited text, purchase a monopoly of all the world, hadst thou the gold of the west, the treasures of the east, the spices of the south, the pearls of the north, all is nothing to this incarnate angel, this invaluable soul. O wretched worldling, what hast thou done thus to undo thy soul! Was it a wedge of gold, a heap of earth, a hoard of silver, to which

[1] Ambult., p. 69.

thou trustest? see, they are gone, and thy soul is required. Alas, poor soul! whither must it go? To heaven? No; there is another place for wandering sinners: 'Go ye into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.' Thither must it go, with heaviness of heart, into a kingdom of darkness, a lake of fire, a prison of horrible confusion and terrible tortures.

Reader, if thou art not new-born, put this case to thyself, and ask thy soul what it will do in such an hour, when the grave shall come with an *habeas corpus* for thy body, and the devil with an *habeas animam* for the soul; when thy soul shall leave this dwelling of thy body, and pass, naked of all its comforts, into a far country, where devils and damned spirits are the inhabitants, where screeching, yelling, and howling is the language, where fire and brimstone is the meat, and a cup of pure wrath, without the least mixture, is the drink; where weeping and wailing is their calling, where a killing death is all their life. Assure thyself, if thou diest unsanctified, thou wilt find far more and worse than all this.

O my soul, saith Bernard,[1] what a terrible day shall that be, when thou shalt leave this mansion, and enter into an unknown region! Who can deliver thee from those ramping lions? who shall defend thee from those hellish monsters?

Now thou most unworthily undervaluest thy precious soul, little caring what flaws by sin thou causest in this diamond. Like the cock on the dunghill, thou knowest not the worth of this jewel, but preferrest thy barleycorns before it. I have read that there was a time when the Romans wore jewels on their shoes. Thou dost worse; thou tramplest this matchless jewel under thy feet. Whilst thy dying body is clothed and pampered, thy everlasting soul is naked and starved. Some write of Herod, (I suppose because of that infant massacre,) it was better be his swine than his son; for when his superstition hindered him from slaying his hogs, his ambition helped him to kill his child. I say, it were better to be thy beast than thy soul. Thou canst, every morning and evening, whatever happen, take care that thy beasts be watered and foddered, and many times in the day look abroad after them, to see what they ail, and accordingly take order for their supply; and yet, O man, or rather O brute, thou canst let thy soul go a whole day, and never feed it with the set meals of prayer, Scripture, and meditation; yea, and in a whole day (nay, it may be a whole week) not ask thy soul in good earnest how it doth, what it

[1] Bern. Meditat.

wanteth, what sins it hath to be mortified, what grace it hath to be bestowed or increased, what spiritual necessities to be supplied.

Reader, is it not so? Let conscience speak; and canst thou read these lines without blushing and heart-breaking, that thou shouldst spend more time and strength upon thy beasts than upon that soul, which truth itself saith is more worth than a world? Mat. xvi. 26; which is created capable of such a high work as pleasing, glorifying, and enjoying God, and of such a happy reward as the immediate and eternal fruition of, and communion with, his infinite Majesty in heaven. Well, this soul thus despised, when lost, though then too late, will be esteemed. Hell will read thee such a lecture of thy soul's worth, that it will make thee understand it, and believe it, whether thou wilt or no, and then thou shalt have time enough (in that eternity in which thy soul shall be lost) to befool thyself for thy desperate madness in gratifying thy brutish flesh, and thus basely neglecting thy soul, that heaven-born spirit.

Thou shalt by death lose the infinitely blessed God. This is the loss of losses, the misery of miseries, the very hell of hell, such a loss as there was never the like before, nor ever shall be again after it; such a loss as no tongue can express, as no heart can conceive, yet such a loss as thou shalt know fully, when experimentally. The four first losses might have been borne with comfort and delight by the person that had but gained this good, and the fifth could not have been without this. The eternal death of the soul consisteth in its farthest separation from that God whose favour is far better than life. This is the lowest round in that ladder by which thou shalt descend into the bottomless pit. This is the foot of this black, bloody account, the head of that arrow which pierceth the heart of the damned.

This is the worst effect and fruit of sin, that it is privative of our union with, and fruition of, God.[1] 'Depart from me' is as terrible a word as 'everlasting fire.' Ah, whither do they go that go from him, when he alone hath the power of eternal life? How dismal, how dark must that dungeon be where this sun will not shine in the least degree with the light of his countenance! Well may it be called 'blackness of darkness for ever,' Jude 13. The hell of the hypocrites, which will be hottest of all, is set out by this: Job xiii. 16, 'The hypocrite shall not come before God.' Couldst thou have all the mercies that the world can give, yet in this want of God thou wouldst be completely miserable. Ten thousand words

[1] Vines on James iv. 8, p. 23.

cannot speak a soul more unhappy than those two words, *without God*, Eph. ii. 12. Thou mayest be without riches, without friends, without health, without liberty, nay, without all outward blessings, and yet blessed; but if without God, thou art cursed with a curse. When God would couch all arguments in one to persuade to duty, this is instead of all, 'Obey my voice, and I will be your God,' Jer. vii. 23; when he would dissuade and drive them from iniquity, this is the stinging whip, 'Be instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee,' Jer. vi. 8; when he would strike Israel dead with a blow, this is it, 'Woe unto them when I depart from them,'[1] Hosea ix. 12. How sad a saying is that of Saul, 'I am sore distressed,' (and well he might;) 'the Philistines are upon me, and God is departed from me,' 1 Sam. xxviii. 15.

If a partial eclipse of the sun cause such a drooping in the whole creation, what will a total eclipse of this Sun cause? How mournfully doth Micah bemoan the loss of his dunghill deity! 'Ye have taken away my gods, and what have I more? and what is this ye say unto me, What aileth thee?' Judges xviii. 24. Surely the damned, as they will have infinitely more cause, so they will with more horror and anguish bewail the loss of the true God, though all the tears in hell are not sufficient to bewail the loss of this heaven. If the body from which the soul is parted be such a deformed, sad spectacle, what shall the condition of that soul be from which God is parted for ever?

How unable are the children of God to bear the absence of God in this life, though it be but in part, and for a short time! Take Heman, Ps. lxxxviii. 14, 15, 'Lord, why castest thou off my soul? why hidest thou thy face from me? I am afflicted, and ready to die; while I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted.' Observe, the good man is at death's door, and no wonder, whenas to his apprehension the life of his soul had left him; for though no man can see the essential face of God and live, yet no saint can live unless he see the providential face of God. Consider Job, a man of courage, one that had entered the list against Satan, and foiled him. The Sabeans and Chaldeans were too hard for his servants, and captivated his cattle; but Job was too hard for them; he conquered them. The wind that blew down the house on his children could not blow down the tower of his confidence, his hold on Christ; yet when this valiant warrior comes to encounter with the withdrawings of God, how exceedingly is his courage withdrawn: Job xiii.

[1] Sicut sole recedente succedunt densæ tenebræ, sic Deo recedente succedit horribilis maledictio. —*Parœus in Hos.* i.

24, 'Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy?' Why, Lord, are all the appearances from heaven so black and lowering? Why is it that I see not the former smiles of thy face? Oh, what is the cloud that hindereth the light of thy countenance from shining on me? What sin is the mist which is gathered about the true Sun, impeding my sight of thee? 'Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and countest me for thine enemy?'

Behold our Lord Jesus himself, that could bear the spiteful buffetings of some, the bloody scourgings of others, the scorn and derisions of many; that could suffer the treason of one apostle, the denial of another, and the unkindness of them all, without complaining; yet when the deity did but withdraw itself for a time, that the humanity might suffer for our sins, how mournfully doth he sigh out that expression, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Mat. xxvii. 46. It was not his torturing from men, nor the terrors of devils, not the presence of all the powers of darkness, that Christ complained so much of, as the absence of God: 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'

Now meditate, O sinner, if the departure of God, though partial and temporal, were so terrible to his saints, to his Son, how intolerable will the loss of God be to thee, when it shall be total and eternal! Do they mourn so bitterly when for a small moment he forsaketh them, though with great mercies he gathereth them; when in a little wrath he hides his face from them, though with everlasting kindness he hath mercy on them? Isa. liv. 7, 8.

How bitterly wilt thou complain when he shall forsake thee to eternity, when he shall hide his face from thee for ever, and not bestow on thee the least mercy, or smallest kindness! This will be a woe with a witness. Suffering may be the portion of saints, but separation from God the punishment of devils. As the face and comfortable presence of God is the greatest felicity of the saved, so the full withdrawings or absence of God will be the greatest misery of the damned.[1]

Now thou dost not value the enjoyment of God; thou thinkest often that he is too near thee; the coming of God to thee is as to the devils, a torment, Mat. viii. 29. If he draw nigh to thee sometime in a sermon, in a private instruction, in a motion of his Spirit, or in a conviction of thy conscience, thou wishest him farther off with his precise laws, that thou mightest have more liberty for thy fleshly lusts. The voice of thine hellish heart unto God is, 'De-

[1] Summa mors animæ est alienatio a vita Dei in æternitate supplicii.—*Aug. de Civit. Dei*, lib. vi.

part from me, I desire not the knowledge of thy ways,' Job xxi. 14. Well, thy petition shall be granted to thy destruction, and God will take thee at thy word, and give thee thy wish to thy woe, when thy doom shall be to depart from him, Luke xiii. 27; Mat. xxv. 41, and then thou shalt know the incomparable worth of him. Thy understanding shall be cleared, though not changed, that thy knowledge may increase thy sorrow. Thou art now wilfully ignorant of him and his will, (some never look up to the sun but in an eclipse,) but then thou shalt know so much of him to grind thee with tormenting grief for thy loss of him.

As a prisoner through the grates may see the costly apparel, the precious liberty, the pleasant and plentiful provision which others enjoy, whilst he is vexed with hunger, nakedness, cold, and bondage, so thou shalt see bread enough in the Father's house, and the children sitting round about his table eating and feasting in the kingdom of heaven, whilst thou art perishing with hunger. Thou shalt see those rivers of pleasures wherein the godly bathe their souls, those soul-ravishing delights which they enjoy in God, the fountain of all good, whilst thou art sentenced to an eternal separation from him.

CHAPTER VII.

The positive part of a sinner's misery at death.

Now, tell me whether the sinful wretch be not a loser by death, when he shall lose all his wealth, friends, and opportunities of grace, the company of all the saints, all his false hopes of heaven, his precious soul, and the ever blessed God; and tell me whether sin, how sweet soever it be in the commission, will not be bitter in the conclusion; whether, in such an hour, the devil will not pay thee thy full wages for all thy wicked works; whether it be worth the while to continue in thine unregenerate estate, though thou couldst gain never so much, when it will certainly end in such inestimable loss. In a word, answer me whether the greatest pleasure thou canst gain for thy flesh, the greatest addition thou canst gain to thy estate, by a sinful, irreligious life, can countervail the everlasting loss of God and thy soul?

But this is not all, sinner; I have not done with thee yet. I have told thee a little of thy loss; for the whole of it no tongue can tell, no pen can write. I will now tell thee thy gain by death, and then

do thou cast up thy account, and tell me whether thy wickedness will not end in woe.

First, By death thou shalt gain a cursed ripeness, perfection of sin, if it may be called perfection. Upon earth the most notorious sinner is a lion chained up, and kept in; but in hell he will be let loose, and then his ravenous nature, and cruel disposition, will appear to purpose.

Thou yet standest in a soil, saith that accurate writer,[1] not so proper for the ripening of sin, which will not come to its fulness till transplanted unto hell. Thou who art here so maidenly and modest, as to blush at some sins out of shame, and forbear the actings of others out of fear, when there thou shalt see thy case as desperate as the devil doth his; then thou wilt spit out thy blasphemies, with which thy nature is stuffed, with the same malice that he doth.

The vilest man in this world is like a swine in a fair meadow; but in the other world, there will be the wallowing in the mire. Thy heart now is like the sea, which cannot rest, but is ever casting up mire and dirt of sin, foaming out thy own shame, yet still it is shut up with bars and doors of restraining grace: 'Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.' But then the doors will be opened, the banks broken down, and the flood-gates taken up; and oh what a deluge, what an overflow of sin will be there!

Here if God should not put a bridle into the mouth of these unruly beasts, and hold them in, there would be no living for a saint among them; but then, when the good shall be parted from them, the reins shall be laid, in some respect, on their own necks, and then they will run to the same excess of riot and sin with the very devils.

All the weeping in hell will not wash thee a whit the cleaner, and all the fire there will not consume the least of thy dross.[2] He that is filthy at death, will be filthy still; and he that is unjust then, shall be unjust for ever, Rev. xxii. 11.

Hell may fitly be called Pompey's theatre, the glory of old Rome, a sty of filthiness.[3] Every bottle of wickedness will be there filled with those bitter waters; thou that now makest a match with mischief, shalt then have thy bellyful. Here sin is thy sin and defilement, but there it will be thy hell, thy punishment. Here thou

[1] Gurnal's Armour, part i., p. 257.

[2] Voluntas morientis confirmatur in eo statu in quo moritur.

[3] Arcem omnium turpitudinum.

sportest with it, but there thou shalt smart for it. Now it is thy pleasure, but then it will be thine everlasting pain.

Sin is ugly to a saint on earth, notwithstanding all her gaudy attire, and painted face; but oh what a deformed monster she will be in hell, when she shall be stripped of all her ornaments of pleasure and profit, and when all her paint shall be washed off with rivers of brimstone! I thus preach, and thus think, saith Chrysostom, that it is more bitter to sin against Christ than to suffer the torments of hell. And holy Anselm saith, that if the evil of sin were proffered to him, and the torments of hell, he had rather choose hell than sin. Thus odious sin is to a godly man in this world, and surely it will not be amiable to a wicked man in the other world; but they who now glory in their shame, will then be ashamed of their glory, and find their lusts more burdensome to them, how lightly soever now they go with them, than ever prisoners did their chains and fetters.

If thy soul be so unhealthy in so pure an air as this, comparatively, is among the saints of God, how diseased will it be in that misty region of darkness, in that pest-house, among devils and infectious spirits!

Secondly, Thou shalt gain by death a fulness of sorrow. When thy sins come to their highest degree, then will thy sorrows likewise, both in regard of intension and duration.

1. In regard of intension; and how great this will be I am not able to tell thee. When one was desired to paint the Spanish inquisition, he took a table and besmeared it with blood, implying the torments were so cruel and bloody that his pencil could not delineate them. Sure I am Phalaris's bull, Low-Country racks, and all outlandish tortures whatsoever, are but plays and bugbears to the sufferings of the damned. There are no sorrows like to their sorrows, wherewith the Lord afflicteth them in the day of his fierce wrath. If the wrath of God be kindled but a little, and a spark thereof light into the conscience of a saint, what a work doth it make.[1] There is no rest in his flesh, nor quiet in his bones. When the arrows of the Almighty stick within him, the poison thereof soon drinks up his spirits, Ps. xxxviii. 3; Job vi. 4. What will their condition then be, against whom God shall stir up all his wrath! Ps. lxxviii. 39. Hell is said to be prepared for the devil and his angels, Mat. xxv. 41; as if the almighty and infinite God had sat down and studied the most exquisite torments that could be to inflict on them.

[1] Una guttula malæ conscientiæ totum mare mundani gaudii absorbet.—*Luth.*

As when he would glorify the riches of his mercy, on them that love him and keep his commands, he provideth fulness of joy, and greater pleasures than the heart of man can possibly conceive; so when he would glorify his justice, in the highest degree, on them that hate him, and wilfully break his laws, he prepareth fulness of sorrow, and greater pain than any, yea, than all the men in the world can possibly comprehend. A melancholy man may fancy, saith one,[1] vast and terrible fears, fire, sword, tempests, racks, furnaces, scalding lead, boiling pitch, running bell-metal, and, being kept alive in all these, to feel their torments; but these come far short of the wrath of God.

For (1.) There are bounds set to the hurting power of the creature. The fire can burn, but it cannot drown; the serpent can sting, but not tear in pieces.

(2.) The fears of the heart are bounded within those narrow apprehensions which itself can frame of the hurts which may be done. But the wrath of God proceeds from an infinite justice, and is executed by an omnipotent and unbounded power, comprising all the terror of all the creatures, as the sun doth all other light, eminently and excessively in it. It burns, and drowns, and tears, and stings, and can make nature feel much more than reason is able to comprehend.

'A wounded spirit who can bear?' Prov. xviii. 14. The wise man gives a challenge to the whole creation, to find out a person that is strong enough to undergo such a burden, and certainly none ever dared to accept the challenge. How intolerable hath such a weight been to them that are lions for strength and courage! This caused David's broken bones and watered couch. This made Heman at his wits' end, Ps. lxxxviii. 15. This made Spira, that seven years' monument of God's justice, as Mr Shepherd, in his Sincere Convert, calls him, to roar so horribly out of anguish of spirit. This made Daniel choose rather to be cast to the cruel lions, than to carry about with him such a ravenous lion in his conscience. This made some of the martyrs to feel a very hell in their consciences after their recantation. No wolf in the breast, no worm in the bowels, no frenzy so outrageous as a gnawing, corroding conscience.

If the wrath of a king be as the roaring of a lion, oh what is the wrath of God! And if his wrath be so terrible in this world, where there is ever some mixture of mercy with it, what will it be in the other world, when the soul shall have a cup of pure wrath to drink,

[1] Dr Reynolds on Hosea xiv., p. 23, sermon 1.

when God shall shew the unconceivableness of his strength, in tormenting the creature, and preserving it to feel those torments?[1] 'Who knoweth the power of his anger?' Ps. xc. 11. There will be tribulation and anguish, indignation and wrath, on the soul of every man that doeth evil, Rom. ii. 8, 9. There is fire to burn, and brimstone to choke, Mat. xii. 40, and chains to bind, and serpents to sting, and worms to gnaw, Mark ix. 44; Jude 12, and darkness to affright; there is variety, universality, and extremity of torments.

Augustine admires it, and saith, that for vehemency of heat it exceeds our fire, as much as ours doth fire painted on the wall.[2] But the sufferings of thy soul, will be the soul of thy sufferings; the worm that never dieth, will be the killing death. When thou shalt remember all thy former sinful pleasures, of which nothing remaineth but thy present shame and pain; when thou shalt reflect upon the former offers thou hast had, of all the dainties which others feed on in heaven, and despair now of ever obtaining the least crumb that falleth from the master's table; when thou shalt foresee the great and terrible day of the Lord Jesus, the reuniting of thy body to thy soul, the easeless and endless torments which soul and body must endure together; thy sins past will horribly perplex thee, thy present shame will lamentably confound thee, thy future tortures will unspeakably affright thee.[3]

Oh it will be a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God! Heb. xii. 29. One touch of it made a man at arms to cry out sadly, 'Have pity upon me, my friends, have pity upon me, for the hand of God hath touched me,' Job xix. 21. One blow of it broke the backs of the angels, Jude 6. Alas! sinner, what wilt thou do under the whole weight of it? how will thy heart endure, or thy hands be strong, in this day that the Lord shall thus deal with thee? The Lord hath spoken it, and he will do it, Ezek. xxii. 14.

Now thou canst hear, and read, and talk of hell, and be no more troubled than physicians are at the many diseases which affect their patients; nay, it may be thou dost jeer, when thou shouldst fear;[4] like leviathan, laugh at the shaking of the spear. If a minister come to thee, as Lot to his sons-in-law, and warn thee to leave

[1] Prima mors animam nolentem pellit a corpore; secunda nolentem retinet in corpore.—*Aug. de Civit. Dei*, lib. xxi. cap. 4.

[2] Aug., *ibid.*, lib. xii. cap. 13.

[3] *Memoria præteritorum, sensus præsentium, et metus futurorum*, are the whole of soul's torments.

[4] *Credo quæ de inferis dicuntur falsa existimas*, said Cato to Cæsar.

the Sodom of thy sinful, sensual life, and tell thee that otherwise the Lord will destroy thee, that fire and brimstone will be thy portion; he seemeth to thee (as Lot to them, Gen. xix. 14) as one that mocketh; thou thinkest that he is in jest, but they feel what they would not fear. Now they are suffering the vengeance of eternal fire, Jude 7; and so wilt thou, if God prevent not by renewing thy heart, and reforming thy life. And though now thou art so senseless, that the seat thou sittest in, and the pillar thou leanest on, are as much affected with the threatenings and denunciation of the judgments of God as thou art, yet then thou wilt be sensible enough; and thine eyes, so dry now, will weep enough when they come to that place, where is nothing but weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, Mat. xxiv. 51. As the love of God is a known unknown love, Eph. iii. 18, 19; none know it fully, but they that enjoy it in glory; so the anger of God is a known unknown anger, Ps. xc. 11; none can know it perfectly, but they that shall feel it eternally.

2. It will be full in regard of duration: all thy sad losses, and all thy sorrowful gains, will be for ever. There was nothing else wanting to make thee completely miserable, but the everlasting duration of them; and, lo, here it is. The positive part of thy punishment will be permanent; there the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched, Mark ix. 44; and the privative part also shall be perpetual—thou shalt suffer everlasting perdition from the presence of the Lord, 2 Thes. i. 9.

Whatsoever relateth to the torments of the carnal is eternal. God, who damneth them, is eternal: 1 Tim. i. 17, 'Now, to the King eternal, immortal, the only wise God,' &c. The fire which tormenteth them is eternal—Jude 7, 'suffering the vengeance of the eternal fire;' the chains which bind them, the worm which gnaws them, the judgment given against them, are all eternal, Jude 7; Heb. vi. 2. Thou sinnest in thy eternity, and God will make thee suffer in his eternity.

Thou sinnest against an infinite God, and therefore thy punishment must be infinite; which, because it cannot be in regard of intension, thy back being not strong enough to bear an infinite stroke, therefore it must be in duration. Infinite power cannot inflict greater or longer pains than infinite justice doth call for. The debt thou owest to the righteousness of God will be ever paying and never paid, and therefore thou shalt not escape out of that prison, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing, Mat. v. 23.

The command of Caius Caligula to the executioner, after he had

condemned a malefactor, was so to strike that they might feel themselves dying, and endure the pains of an enduring death.[1] Such will be the everlasting death of the damned: they will be ever, ever dying, and never dead; they shall seek death, but not find it; follow after it, but it will flee from them, Rev. ix. 6.

The same author reporteth of one that requested of Tiberius Cæsar death rather than long imprisonment, how he was answered by the emperor, You and I are not yet friends.[2] The truth is, the punishment there must needs be long, yea, eternal, because God and the sinner shall never be friends. In this life God treateth with the soul by his ambassadors upon terms of peace; nay, he beseecheth the sinner to be reconciled, 2 Cor. v. 20; the carnal man still continueth in his enmity against God, walking contrary to him, and fighting against him. God continueth many a day, to some many a year, offering peace, desiring there may be a league made; only it must be offensive and defensive. It must be a holy peace and league against the devil, the world, and the flesh. Upon this the sinner breaks off; he will not be an enemy to his old cursed friends. Now at death this treaty dieth; and the breach then continuing, it is irrecoverable for ever. Then the King of kings causeth his terrors to set themselves in array against the sinner, and proclaimeth open and eternal war.

Reader, for thy soul's sake let me beseech thee to ponder this but one half quarter of an hour every morning, that the pain which sin bringeth will be eternal. Oh how may it take off the edge of thy love to thy most pleasing lusts! Endless misery must needs be easeless; no condition so intolerable as a miserable condition that is unalterable. It is a comfort to a woman in travail, in the midst of her sharp throes and bitter pangs, to think these will have an end; the hope of that doth much help her to hold out; but, woe and alas! they whose end is damnation, shall have damnation which hath no end.

It doth much support the saints under the anger of God, that, though it be sharp, it will be but short; his anger endureth but for a moment, Ps. xxx. 5. But then, will not the heart of the sinner be rent in pieces with rage and despair, to know that the wrath of God must abide on him? John iii. 36.

The Egyptians' three days darkness was esteemed a sore plague; but what will thy punishment, O sinner, be, when thou shalt suffer utter darkness, blackness of darkness? Jude 13. Ah, wounding word, *Ever, Ever!* the most cutting word in comparison of this is

[1] Ita feri, ut se mori sentiat.—*Suet.* [2] Nondum tecum redii in gratiam.

healing; the bitterest word in respect of this is sweet. Despair will be the cutting off of all hope; to have hope, the anchor of the soul, cut off, will be the deepest cut in the world; then the vessel of thy soul will be liable to all storms and tempests imaginable.

Suppose that one of thy hands were to continue burning in one of our fires as many millions of years as there hath been minutes since the creation, couldst thou undergo it with any patience? What thinkest thou of it? Alas! this were a mercy, a heaven to the misery of men in hell. What wilt thou do when thy whole man shall suffer the vengeance of eternal fire? Jude 7. 'Who can dwell with the devouring fire? Who can dwell with everlasting burning?' Isa. xxxiii. 14.

It is storied of one Roger, Bishop of Salisbury, that being in prison extremely tortured, live he would not, and die he could not. Truly such will the case be of rebellious ones: they shall long for death, but it will not come; and dig for it more than for hid treasures. Oh how would they rejoice and be glad if they could find a grave! But a being must be given to them that are in misery, and life to the bitter in soul. It is called death indeed, because life is neither desired there, nor can it properly be said to be enjoyed: it is a living death, or a dying life; such a death as shall never taste of life, and such a life as shall never taste of death. After the murderer of his soul hath continued in that lake of fire as many thousand years as there are fish in the mighty ocean, and as there are creatures great and small upon the whole earth, and as there are stars in the heavens, and after this as many millions of ages as there are hours in all the forementioned time, yet, after all this, his torment will not be one moment nearer to an end. Oh eternity, eternity, eternity, what art thou? to what shall I liken thee, or with what comparison shall I compare thee? Thou art like a vast ocean which hath no banks, like an outrageous fire which knoweth no bounds, like the grave that is never satisfied, like the barren womb that never saith, It is enough; in respect of God, thou art like Melchisedec, without father, without mother, having neither beginning of days nor end of life. In respect of the good, like a day which had a morning, but shall never have an evening; in respect of the bad, like a night which had an evening, but shall never have a morning. In thee it is that the justice and severity of God, the sinfulness and malignity of sin, the deceitfulness and vanity of the world, the madness and desperate folly of sinners, will sufficiently be demonstrated. In time men are whipped, but in thee it is that they are executed. In thee it is that men must

suffer long for all their abuse of the long-suffering of God. In thee it is that the swearer shall have enough of wounds, and oaths, and blasphemies, when he shall have devils wounding his soul with their fiery darts, and when he shall blaspheme the name of God through extremity of torments. In thee it is that the adulterer will have enough of lust and lasciviousness, when he shall embrace deformed devils, and lie down in a bed of fire instead of feathers, surrounded with curtains of frightful fiends. In thee it is that the drunkard will have enough of his cups, when a cup of the pure wrath of an infinitely incensed God shall be presented to him, and be forced to drink it all up, though there be eternity to the bottom. In thee it is that the Sabbath-breaker shall have enough of disturbing God's rest, when he shall be tormented, and have no rest day nor night for ever and ever, Rev. xx. 10. In thee it is that the atheist in his family shall have enough of his prayerlessness and regardlessness of God, when he shall be ever, ever praying with his whole heart for a drop of water to cool his tongue, and God shall never, never shew the least regard towards him. In thee it is that the hypocrite will have enough of putting off God with a painted holiness, when he shall find a real hell. In thee, lastly, it is that the covetous worldling, that, like Korah, is swallowed up of earth alive, and yet hath never enough, shall have fire enough, pain enough, and wrath enough in hell.

Consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, when there is none to deliver you,[1] Ps. l. 22. Good God! whither is man fallen? what desperate hardness hath seized on his heart, that he should be every moment liable to such a boundless, bottomless sea of scalding wrath, and yet as insensible of it as if it did no whit concern him. Ah, did but the seduced world believe thy word, they would mind other works than now they do.

But, reader, what is that judgment? is not the mirth of every sinner that maketh a mock of sin worse than madness? Should not the sting in sin's tail deter thee more than the false beauty of its face allure thee? Shalt thou look henceforward upon the most delightful sin, as any better than Claudius did mushroom, pleasant, and poison! Well, whoever thou art that readest this use, be confident all this, and ten thousand times more, is thy birthright; thou art by nature an heir to this estate, that lieth in the valley of Hinnom. All this is the wages due to thee for thy service to sin; sin payeth all that die its servants in such black money; and shouldst thou go out of this world before thou art new-born, thou shalt as certainly

[1] Gehenna nihil gravius, sed ejus metu nihil utilius.—*Chrysost.*

find and feel more than all this in the other world, as there is a God in heaven, and as thou art a living creature on earth. The God of truth hath spoken it, and who shall disannul it? Mat. xviii. 3, and v. 10; John iii. 3. Though thou art not actually under it, yet thou art every moment liable to it; this cloud of blood hangs night and day over thy head, and thou knowest not how soon it may break, and shower down upon thee. The decree and sentence is already passed in heaven, that thou who turnest not in time, shalt burn to eternity; and thou canst not tell how soon God may seal the warrant for thy execution.

Bellarmine is of opinion, that one glimpse of hell-fire were enough to make a man turn, not only Christian, but monk, and to live after the strictest order. Drexelius tells us of a young man given to his lust, that he could not endure to lie awake in the dark; and on a time, being sick, he could not sleep all night; and then he had these thoughts, What! is it so tedious to lie awake one night—to lie a few hours in the dark? what is it then to lie in everlasting chains of darkness? I am here in my house, on a soft bed, kept from sleep one night; oh to lie in flames, and in darkness everlasting, how dreadful will that be! This was the means of his conversion.

Oh that, reader, what I have written might work such an effect upon thy soul! how abundantly should I be satisfied for all my pains! how heartily should I bless that God, who by his providence called me to this task! Shall I entreat thee, as thou hast the least spark of true love to thy dying body, to thy immortal soul, to thine eternal peace, to break off thy sins by repentance, and fly all ungodliness as hell; for dost thou not perceive out of the word of the living and true God, that though thy lust may be sweet in the act, 'yet her end is as bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell,' Prov. v. 4, 5.

And in order hereunto, I desire thee to observe faithfully those directions I shall give thee in the third use; for I would not only open the sore, and shew its danger, but also, by the help of the physician of souls, prepare a plaster. The Lord enable thee to apply it for thy cure!

Take a man that is most addicted to his pleasures,[1] and bring him to the mouth of a furnace red hot and flaming, and ask him, How much pleasure wouldst thou take to continue burning in this furnace for one day? he would answer undoubtedly, I would not be tormented in it one day, to gain the whole world, and all the

[1] Drexel. Eter. iii. Consid.

pleasures of it. Ask him a second time, What reward would you take to endure this fire half a day? Propound what reward you will, there is nothing so precious which he would buy at so dear a rate as those torments; and yet how comes it to pass, O God, that for a little gain, and that vile; for a little honour, and that fugitive; for a little pleasure, and that fading, men so little regard hell-fire, which is eternal.

By this time I hope it is day in thine understanding, and thou seest clearly that there is a difference between the death of the righteous and the wicked; that as the same perfume, which is mortal to the ravenous vulture, is refreshing to the true dove; that as the same herb which cureth men stung with serpents, killeth beasts; so the same mortal disease which cureth the godly of all their spiritual and bodily distempers, killeth the wicked; they are killed with death, Rev. vi.

Heaviness to a saint may endure for the night of this life, but joy will come in the morning of death; whereas the freshest streams of sinful delights will end in a salt sea of sorrows and tears. The most prosperous sinner is but like a thief that goeth through a pleasant meadow to the gallows.

CHAPTER VIII.

A second use of trial, with motives to enforce it.

I come now to a second use, and that will be by way of examination.

If it be so, that they who have Christ for their life shall have gain by their death, then examine whether you are one of them, to whom to die will be gain. Like a merchant, cast up the accounts between God and thy soul, and see how much thou art worth for another world. It is good husbandry to know the state of thy flock, Prov. xxvii. 23; but there is a greater necessity of knowing the state of thy soul, of communing with thy own heart, Ps. iv. 4. Many a man may say of himself, as the epigrammatist of his unneighbourly neighbour, *In urbe tota nemo tam prope tam procul que nobis.* Is it not a thousand pities to live known to others, and to die unknown to thyself? to speak so much, and so often, to others, and yet, in the many years that thou hast lived, never to have spent one hour in serious discourse with thyself about thine eternal condition, what shall become of thee for ever?

Friend, it may be thou hast been very solicitous to know what shall befall thee whilst thou livest; is there not more cause for thee to be inquisitive what shall befall thee when thou diest? I think it concerneth thee to be faithful and diligent about this work of examining thy soul, whether Jesus Christ be thy life, when all thy happiness hangs on this hinge, even thine estate for eternity. Trivial matters may be passed over slightly, but things of weight must be minded seriously.

Reader, hadst thou ever a matter of greater or equal concernment to thine unchangeable and eternal estate? Are not thy following thy trade, thy providing for thy family, thy eating, drinking, sleeping, and the most necessary things thou canst imagine about thy outward man, but rattles and babies, but toys and trifles, in comparison of this?

Suppose the title I am speaking of did but concern an estate in land of one hundred pound per annum, which thou wert buying, wouldst thou not consult with this and that man, whether the title were good or no? Wouldst thou think two or three days ill spent in searching and advising, to prevent the cozenage of thee and thy children? And doth not thy soul, thine eternal estate, deserve more care, more time, more pains, more consulting, searching, and questioning, for fear of an everlasting miscarriage? Let thy reason be judge. Had not those wires need to be strong, that have such a weight as thy eternal welfare hanging on them? should not that anchor be cast sure, which is intrusted with a vessel so richly laden as with thy soul, that jewel of inestimable value, more worth than a world? Can that foundation be too firmly laid, that hath such a building as eternity of happiness depending on it? Without question, those deeds and evidences, if ever any, had need to be unquestionable, that convey the inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, reserved in heaven.

And the rather shouldst thou try thy soul thoroughly, because, shouldst thou content thyself with a counterfeit title to heaven, as most men and women amongst us do, by virtue only of some deeds which the devil and thy carnal heart have forged, and wouldst so die, thou wouldst assuredly be dealt with as a cheat, and cast into the prison of hell, and then thy condition will be most lamentable, because it will be irrecoverable.

If thou missest at all when thou diest, thou missest for ever and for ever. An error then can never be mended; there can be no second throw cast, no second edition can come forth to correct the errors of the former; but the great work for which thou wert born

not being done, thou art undone to eternity; and then, as godly men befool themselves in this world, while they live, Ps. lxxiii. 2, for their corruption, so thou wilt befool thyself in the other world, when thou diest, for thy presumption, Jer. xvii. 11, that thou shouldst think the rotten props of a little profession, of a few outward privileges, and inward good meanings, as thou callest them, could bear the weight of thy soul, and thine endless state, that thou should build so slightly for a dwelling of perpetuity. 'Set thy heart therefore to all the words that I speak unto thee; for it is not a vain thing, but it is for thy life,' Deut. xxxii. 46, 47.

Well, friend, the great question which I shall put to thee will be this: Canst thou say, to thee to live is Christ? Thy gain by death dependeth on this. Examine thyself thoroughly,[1] prove thyself whether thou art in the faith or no, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. The eagle trieth her young ones by the sun whether they be of the right brood or no, as some affirm. Do thou try thyself by this Sun of righteousness, by this life in Christ, by thine ingrafting into Christ. Ask thy soul whether it be acquainted with the new birth, the new creation, the divine nature, the renewing in the spirit of thy mind, the sanctification of the Spirit, the walking after the Spirit, the image of God, the writing of his laws in thy heart, the law of the spirit of life in Christ, effectual calling; unless thou hast that one thing signified by all these things, thou hast nothing; then, and not till then, thou hast crossed the line, shot the gulf, art safely landed in Christ, and hast attained that which ever accompanieth salvation.

But because this self-trial, though it be a necessary duty, yet is a work of much difficulty—it is easier for a man to speak to the stateliest king in the world, than to himself as he ought to speak—and because, naturally, men's sores and corruptions make them so unwilling to be searched for fear of pain, I shall annex two or three quickening motives to persuade thee to this much-neglected duty.

The first motive.

Consider how easy and ordinary it is to be deceived, though it be in a work of such infinite weight; now where the business is weighty, and the mistake ordinary and easy, it requireth thee to search thoroughly. It is one of the most ordinary and easy things in the world for a child of disobedience to live and die asleep in

[1] πειράζετε, ἀ πείρω, to pierce through and through, because by piercing a thing is tried what it is within, whether sound or no.

sin, and never dream of hell, till he come to awake in the other world in a bed of fire. Thy deceitful heart will be night and day inclining thee to sleep, and the devil will be sure to keep the cradle rocking.

Alas! how very few are there that will be persuaded to cast up their spiritual accounts; but, like men that we say are worse than naught, loathe the thoughts of looking into or summing up their estates; or like some women, when they come to be old, turn the back side of their looking-glasses toward them, as unwilling to see their own wrinkles and deformity.

And of those that do sometimes examine themselves, how many are there that do it slightly and superficially, contenting themselves with false marks, quickly believing what they would have, even all to be well, till they are sent to be undeceived in hell.

Maude, mother to King Henry the Second, being besieged at Oxford, she got away with white apparel in the snow, undiscovered.[1] So do many hypocrites, with their profession of snow-like purity, pass among men; but God knows the heart.

All is not gold that glitters, nor is all grace that makes a fair show in the flesh. There is much counterfeit coin in the world, that goeth current among men, as if it were as good as the best; so there is a great deal of counterfeit holiness in the world, a great deal of civility, of morality, of common grace, which is taken (or rather mistaken) by men for true saving grace; much fancy is taken for faith, presumption for hope, self-love for saint-love, and worldly sighs for godly sorrow.

What can the saint do, but as, to the outward appearance, the sinner may do the same? As the devil is God's ape, so is the self-deluding soul not seldom the saint's ape.

Doth the saint abstain from gross sins? so doth he whose religion consisted so much in negatives, Luke xviii. 11. Doth the saint pray? so do the pharisees, and make long prayers too, Mat. xxiii. 14. Do the saints fast? Neh. i. 4; Dan. ix.; so do they, Mat. vi. 16, and ix. 14; and it may be twice in one week, Luke xviii. 12. Do the saints give alms? Acts x.; so do they, Mat. vi. 1, 2. Do the saints confess sin? the sinner can do it in the very same words, 1 Sam. xv. 24. Doth Ephraim repent? Jer xxxi. 18; so doth Judas, Mat. xxvii. 3. Doth Abraham believe? Rom. iv.; so doth Simon Magus, Acts viii. 13. Doth Hezekiah humble himself? 2 Chron. xxxii. 26; so doth Ahab, and walk softly into the bargain, 1 Kings xxii. 15. Doth the man after God's own heart

[1] Camb. Brit.

fulfil all God's will? Acts xiii. 22; you shall hear that a Jehu shall do very much, and that by a testimony from God's own mouth: 2 Kings x. 30, 'Thou hast done well in executing that which was right in mine eyes; thou hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in mine heart.' What a great resemblance is there in all these outwardly, but a vast difference inwardly! The ungodly sometimes do attain to the outward actions, but never to the inward sanctified affections of the godly; as the painter may paint fire, but he cannot paint heat—that is beyond his skill. Many titular Christians are like the onyx-stone, of which naturalists write, that it is clear and bright in the superficies, but dark and muddy at the centre: men of civil conversation, but not of sanctified actions. Now all this calleth aloud to thee, to try thyself whether thou goest beyond them, that do all before-mentioned, and yet come short of heaven.

Besides, it is not seldom that a true Christian, for want of a prudent trial, judgeth himself unsound. As the face of Moses, so his heart shines with grace, and he knoweth it not; Christ is in him, as he was with the two disciples, and he, as they, is ignorant of it. Many Christians, like Hagar, weep and mourn that they must die for thirst, when the water of life is by them, yea, within them.

There is that maketh himself rich, full of peace and joy from assurance of God's favour and his salvation, yet hath nothing—not one jot of grace or true ground of joy; there is that maketh himself poor—persuadeth himself to be in a most wretched estate—and yet hath great riches, Prov. xiii. 7, is highly in God's favour, and hath great store of saving grace.

But most commonly the error is on the other side. How doth every swaggering, or, at best, civilised sinner, presume that he is a saint! How often hath he blear-eyed Leah lying by him all night, and he thinketh it is beautiful Rachel, till the light of the morning discover the contrary! How many have the devil and the world lodging in their arms and embraces, and think it is Christ, the fairest of ten thousand, till upon examination it be found otherwise!

Reader, take heed this be not thy case; that thou, like Uriah, carriest letters about thee, importing thy own execution, and yet thou not know of it. It is ordinary for men to think they are spiritually rich, and increased with goods, and to have need of nothing, and not to know that they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, Rev. iii. 17. They cry, like Agag, 'Surely the bitterness of death is past;' there is no fear of death,

of wrath, of hell, or damnation, when they are liable every moment to be hewn in pieces before the Lord, to be torn in pieces by the roaring lion. Oh, how many a precious vessel (soul I mean) hath been split upon this rock of presumption! Doth it not therefore concern thee to be serious and faithful in searching thy heart, lest thou shouldst, as the most, deceive thyself about a business of such unspeakable consequence?

The second motive.

Consider the fewness of them that have Christ for their life, or that live this spiritual life. Every one almost that liveth within the visible church is ready to say that heaven is his inheritance, and he shall escape the wrath to come, when the word of God and the works of men do clearly and fully speak the contrary.

The devil hath his droves: all the earth wander after the beast, Rev. xvii. 8. 'The whole world lieth in wickedness,' 1 John v. 19. 'The enemies of God cover the earth like grasshoppers for multitude,' Judges vii. 12. They fill the country, when the Israelites are like two little flocks of kids, 1 Kings xx. 27. The good and the true shepherd calleth his flock a little flock, Luke xii. 32, nay, a little, little flock, there being in the original two diminutives, to shew their fewness. When four, if not five cities were destroyed, one righteous Lot with his small family is delivered, Gen. xix. 15. When a whole world is drowned, a few, that is, eight souls, are saved, 1 Pet. iii. 20. Therefore the children of God are called a remnant, Micah vii. 18—two or three yards remaining of forty or fifty; and compared to the gleanings after the vintage, Isa. xvii. 6—one or two bunches may be left under some thick or utmost bough; but what are they to the many basketfuls that were gathered before? The saints are jewels: now, how few are there of such pearls, in comparison of pebble? Mal. iii. 17; and strangers, Ps. cxix. 19, how small is their number to natives, which are the world's own, John xv. 19. The church of Sardis hath a few names only that have not defiled their garments, Rev. iii. 4.

Some have divided the world into thirty parts, and have affirmed nineteen of those to be without Christ, in whose name alone is salvation; and six of the remaining eleven to be papists, which certainly are in no safe way to heaven; and five parts of thirty only to be protestants, amongst whom they that read of their way of worship beyond the seas will find many of these to be but mongrel protestants. But, to waive this, and to come to England, where it

is generally by godly men believed that God hath as numerous an issue of new-born children as in any such quantity of ground in the world, and, reader, take the public congregation thou dost join with in the solemn worship of the ever-blessed God upon his own day; and suppose one should come and sweep out of it, in the first place, all notorious sinners—drunkards, swearers, adulterers, extortioners, liars, railers, scoffers at godliness, Sabbath-breakers, and the like, upon whom, whosoever looketh with Scripture spectacles may see the devil's mark on their foreheads, hell written on them in great letters, they continuing impenitent—would not such a besom sweep away much dust, even a great part of the people of the parish where thou livest? But suppose one should come, in the second place, and purge out your civil and moral, yet unsanctified men and women—such, I mean, as are fair and just in their carriage and dealings; you cannot say, black is their eye; they pay to every man his due; these are good second-table men and women; their religion consisteth altogether in their righteousness towards men; they will not for a world wrong their neighbour of a farthing, but they make no conscience of robbing God of the great fear, chief love, choice delight, strong trust, which are due to his Majesty; they know not what it is to know him and his will, to acknowledge him by religious performances of prayer, reading, and the like, in their families and closets; they can scarce tell you what God is, or what Christ is, or what the Lord Jesus hath suffered or purchased for sinners. As old as many of them are, they are more ignorant of the natures, offices, states of Christ, of regeneration, justification, and sanctification, than little children; and yet they are too old to learn. The minister cannot persuade them to come to him, and be instructed by him in the principles of the oracles of God; nay, and they will not believe that ignorance is a damning sin, though God hath spoken so peremptorily, that Christ shall come 'in flaming fire to render vengeance on them that know not God,' 2 Thes. i. 8, and he hath told them expressly, that men perish for want of knowledge, Hosea iv. 6; Prov. i. 22, 29.

Suppose, I say, one should purge out all these civil, righteous, yet ignorant and irreligious persons—questionless he would purge out two parts of three of the remaining ill-humours—how very many would that blind captain, ignorance, lead out of a congregation!

But suppose one came, in the third place, again, and take away them that are righteous in their dealings with men, and seem religious in their duties towards God; that pray, and hear, and read,

and fast, and instruct their families, and call upon God in secret, and yet are only so good to the eye of man, being, like some fruit, fair in the outside, but rotten at core, having self-ends and carnal principles in all they do, Mat. xxiii. and vi.

After three such sweepings, how few, thinkest thou, would be left in a congregation, or in a parish. If Christ should come with his whip of cords, and scourge all these out of his temple—whom the word of God clearly condemneth—would not Jesus be left almost quite alone, as he was in John viii. 9?

Besides all those forementioned, how many are there whose religion consisteth merely in opinions, or heresies, or schism, and separation from the people of God and public worship, and from the good old way of faith and repentance, that mind neither Sabbath, nor sacraments, nor family duties, and trust for salvation to the light within them, even till they come to utter darkness,[1] 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2; Jude 11, 12; 1 John ii. 19. Oh, how few are there that shall be saved! If Ulpian complained there were few true philosophers, have not we more cause to complain there are few true believers? for 'who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?' Isa. liii. 1.

The terms of denying a man's self, or crucifying the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof, or cutting off right hands, and plucking out right eyes; of hating father, mother, wife, child, name, house, and lands—without which Christ will not save the soul—are so irksome, and contrary to the sensual, brutish man, that rather than admit them, they will take their leave of both Saviour and salvation. 'Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth to life, and few there be that find it,' Mat. xvi. 24; Gal. v. 24; Mark ix. 43; Luke xiv. 26; Mat. vii. 14.

Reader, I take not delight to number the people of God, much less to lessen their number. The Lord knoweth I have not written this head without some sorrow of heart; my prayer is like that of Joab's, The Lord add unto his people an hundredfold, and grant that his sons may come from far, and his daughters from the ends of the earth, that the dominions of his Son may be from sea to sea, and from one end of the land unto the other, 2 Sam. xxiv. But, without all controversy, they are comparatively very few; and why doth the word of God mention it so much but to make thee more diligent and violent for the kingdom of heaven, Mat. vii. 13, 14. If there were but few damned, and many saved, out of the places where we live, I think it would behove thee to try upon what

[1] Totus mundus est Arrianus.—*Jerome.*

ground thou standest, lest thou shouldst be one of those few that must suffer the vengeance of eternal fire; but when so many, when such multitudes, go in the broad way that leadeth to destruction, when the love of many waxeth cold, and it is but an *he* almost that shall endure to the end, and be saved, Mat. xxiv. 12, how much, how much doth it concern thee to look about thee that all things are right within betwixt God and thy soul.

The third motive.

Thirdly, Consider the profitableness of a serious faithful examination of thy estate; if thou hast this spiritual life, thy comfort dependeth upon the knowledge of it. He that hath true grace, shall go to heaven certainly; but he only that knoweth it, shall go to heaven comfortably. What the lawyers say of civil things, I may say of spiritual: Things that appear not, are all one as if they were not at all in being.[1] What comfort hath he that is heir to a vast estate, till he know of it, more than he that hath nothing to do with it? What comfort is it to thee that thou art a child of God, a member of Christ, an heir of heaven, unless thou knowest it upon Scripture grounds? If twenty or thirty are condemned, and one be pardoned, this man torments himself with fears and terrors as much as the rest, till he knoweth of his pardon. Doth not many a Christian, like Jacob, go down to the grave with sorrow, and refuse to be comforted, only upon a false supposition, that the Joseph of their soul is dead, when indeed he is alive, and in favour in the heavenly court, as they upon a true search and inquiry will find? The saints have known their good estate. I do not put thee upon the labour in vain, Gal. ii. 20; 2 Cor. v. 1; and the profit will answer thy pains. And how contented wilt thou be in all conditions, when thou hast once attained the knowledge of the good estate Godward. Thou wilt bid every messenger welcome for his sake that sendeth him; thou needest not fear any servant can night or day knock at thy door with ill news. How willing wilt thou go to duty, and with what alacrity perform them, knowing the God whom thou drawest nigh to is thy loving Father; the Christ, in whose name thou approachest, is thy lovely Saviour; nay, how joyfully mayest thou think of death, as the portal through which thou shalt go into thy Master's joy and endless life. Believe it, thy life will be a heaven upon earth. And shouldst thou find thy estate lost, will it not be an infinite mercy to thee, that thou didst know it be-

[1] De non apparentibus et non existentibus, eadem est ratio.

fore it was too late? How will it awaken thee out of thy security, and affrighten thee upon the apprehension of thy misery! how will it quicken thee to mind thy duty, in loathing thyself, in leaving thy sins, and in flying to thy Saviour! Sound conversion begins at self-examination: first we 'search and try our ways, and then turn to the Lord,' Lam. iii. 40. The way to have our sores cured, is first to have them thoroughly searched: 'I considered my ways, and turned my feet to thy testimonies,' Ps. cxix. 59. If thou wouldst have thy face clean, look into the glass of the law, and view thy spots. He that knoweth not that he is in a wrong path, will not turn back, though the farther he goeth, the greater is his deviation and danger. Jer. xxxi. 19, 'After I was instructed,' or after I was made known to myself, 'I repented.' As Abigail said to David, 'If thou hearken to thy servant, it will be no grief of mind hereafter to my lord, that thou art kept from shedding of blood.' So say I to thee, If thou wilt faithfully examine thyself, it will be no cause of sorrow hereafter to thee, that thou wert thereby kept from a further shedding the blood of thy soul. I will conclude this motive with the meditation of the learned and holy bishop, now with Christ.[1]

"That which is said of the elephant, that being guilty of his deformity, he cannot abide to look on his face in the water, but seeks for troubled and muddy channels, we see in well moralised men of evil conscience, who know their souls are so filthy, that they dare not so much as view them, but shift off all checks of their former iniquity, with the excuses of good fellowship. Whence it is that every small reprehension galls them, because it calls the eye of the soul home to itself, and makes them see a glimpse of what they would not. So have I seen a foolish and timorous patient, which knowing his wound very deep, would not endure the chirurgeon to search it; whereon what can ensue, but a festering of the part, and a danger of the whole body. So have I seen many prodigal wasters run so far in books, that they cannot abide to hear of a reckoning. It hath been an old and true proverb, Oft and even reckonings make long friends. I will oft sum my estate with God, that I may know what I have to expect and answer for; neither shall my score run on so long with God, that I shall not know my debts, or fear an audit, or despair of pardon."

[1] Bish. Hall's Meditat. and Vow., Cent. ii. Meditat. 4.

CHAPTER IX.

The marks of a true Christian from the text.

I come to the touchstone, by which thou must be tried, whether thou art true gold or counterfeit. It is likely thou presumest thy estate is good; well, art thou willing the word of God—that must, whether thou wilt or no, judge thee for thy eternal life or death at the last day—should try thee at this day?[1] If thy wares be right and good, thou wilt not be afraid to bring them out of thy dark shop into the light. If thy title be sound and good, I know thou wilt be ready for a fair trial at law, even at the law of God.

I shall try thee two ways, though both will lead to the same place. I must first entreat thee to put those four particulars to thy soul, which in the beginning I told thee were included in that expression, 'To me to live is Christ.'

The first mark.

Ask thy soul what is the principle of thy religious performances, what is the spring of thy obedience. Men indeed judge of others' principles by their practices, because they cannot discern the heart, whether it be right in a duty or no; but God judgeth of men's practices by their principles, as we may see by his speech of Paul, 'Behold he prayeth,' Acts ix. 11. Paul was a pharisee, one of the strictest of them, and they were much in prayer. But God, who knew his heart was wrong in former duties, takes not any notice of them. Now behold he prayeth; he might say a prayer before, but he never prayed a prayer till now. When he had a right principle, being regenerated by the Holy Ghost, then, and not till then, he made a right prayer. Till the tree be good, the fruit can never be good, Mat. vii. 16. Now friend, what is the principle of thy duties? is it fear of men, hope of honour, desire of gain, or merely the stopping the mouth of conscience, or custom? are these the weights that make thy clock to go? and if these were taken off, would thy devotion stand still? then thy heart is not right in the sight of God; entreat him, for the Lord's sake, that the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee. Or do thy pious actions flow from a renewed will, and renewed affections? Doth the outward correspondency of thy life to the law of God, proceed from an inward conformity in

[1] Ad hunc librum, ut judicem; ad alios, ut judex divenio; saith Melanchthon.

thy heart to the nature and law of God, from the law written within? If it be thus, thy condition is safe; for the deeper the spring is from whence the water comes, the sweeter the water is, and thy services the more acceptable to God.

Speak thyself, whether thou prayest, readest, hearest, singest from the divine nature within, from love to the infinitely amiable God, from the delight thou takest in communion with him in duties. Oh how sweet is that honey, that drops of its own accord from the comb! and how pure is that wine which floweth freely from the grape! So grateful and acceptable is that sacrifice to God, which is seasoned with sincere love: 'Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, and delighteth greatly in his commandments,' Ps. cxxviii. 1.

Or dost thou worship God from the same principle the Sadducees do, who deny the resurrection—only from a desire it may go well with thee in this life? or from the same principle from which the Persians do the devil—only from fear lest he should do thee hurt? Surely that service will be sour, which like verjuice is squeezed out of the crabs. To serve God with a filial fear is commendable, but to serve him from a servile fear is unacceptable.

The upright Christian worketh from an inward principle, the new creation within; and thence it is that spiritual things are so natural and delightful to his regenerate part; as we see in David, 'I delight to do thy will, O my God.' How cometh this to pass, but from an inward principle? 'Thy law is within my heart,' Ps. xl. 8; or as it is in Hebrew, Thy law is in the midst of my bowels. But now, a hypocrite usually acteth from some outward principle, as the pharisees did, Mat. xxiii. 14, 27, and vi. 1, 5. The wind from without makes their mill to go; some goads, or whips, force them forward; hence it is that, like tired jades, they are presently weary, and desire nothing more than to rest, and cease from such unpleasant labour.

The second mark.

Ask thy soul what is the pattern of the life; whom dost thou labour to imitate? is it Christ or thy neighbour? Dost thou set thy watch by the town clock, or by the dial of Scripture, because that never faileth of going according to the Sun of righteousness? A man dead spiritually, like dead fish, ever swimmeth down with the stream of the times; will follow a multitude to do evil, cannot endure to be singular. Like the planet Mercury, at best, if in conjunction with good, he is good; if with bad, he is bad; or, like

water, taketh the figure of the vessel, whatever it be, into which it is put. But now a living Christian doth not dress himself by the glass of the times; whilst he is in the wilderness of this world, he may follow the cloud of faithful witnesses, but it must be no farther than they follow Christ, 1 Cor. xi. 1. Christ is the great standard by which he measureth and trieth, and which he endeavoureth to imitate in his thoughts, words, and actions. He doth *uti verbis et nummis præsentibus, et vivere moribus præteritis*, use such words and money as is current at present, but lives after that example which was in times past. The patterns of godly men bear much sway with him; but he knoweth there are some things in their lives, which are sea-marks to be avoided, and not land-marks to direct us. Therefore, like the eagle, he looketh most at the sun, Christ himself.[1] Now, Christian, examine thyself, whom dost thou look upon for thy pattern; is it thy desire and care to regulate thy family and life, as such a knight, or esquire, or gentleman in the parish where thou livest ordereth his, or as the profane, irreligious neighbours do theirs? or dost thou look upon, and labour to resemble Jesus Christ, to govern thy house and heart as he did his, praying with his apostles, instructing them in the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and the like? Mat. vi. 'Walking humbly, inoffensively, and worthy of the Lord, even unto all well-pleasing,' Heb. vii. 26; 1 Peter i. 19.

It is reported of Jerome, that having read the religious life and death of Hilarion, he cried out, holding up the book, Well, Hilarion shall be the champion whom I will follow. So when thou readest in the Scripture of the heavenly pious life, and holy patient death of the Redeemer, how he did all things well, and none could convince him of sin; is thy soul so ravished with the beauty and lustre of those many graces, which shined so eminently in him, that it breatheth out, Oh that I were like him! oh that I could be as meek and lowly as Christ, that I could deny myself, and despise the world, and glorify God as much as Christ did, that the same mind were in me that was in Christ Jesus![2] And though to thy hearty sorrow, thou seest how far short thou comest of a perfect conformity to him, yet thou resolvest to use all means appointed, that thou mayest be more like him, and concludest, Well, Christ shall be the only champion whom I will follow. Answer thy conscience within thee, whether it be thus or no; for if thou art a

[1] Admonet non omnes promiscue esse imitandos.—*Calv. in Phil.* iii.

[2] Christiani a Christo nomen acceperunt, et operæ pretium est, ut sunt hæredes nominis, ita sint imitatores sanctitatis.—*Bern. Senten.*, p. 496.

living member, thou wilt resemble thy head: 'Those whom God did foreknow, he did predestinate to be conformable to the image of his Son,' Rom. viii. 29. As the image in the glass resembleth the face, in figure, feature, and favour, so doth the true Christian after his proportion resemble Jesus Christ.

The third mark.

Is Christ the comfort of thy life? When trouble, like frosty weather, overtaketh thee, which is the fire at which thou warmest thy heart? Is it this friend, or that place of preferment, or any outward comfort whatsoever? or is it thy relation to Christ, and his affection to thee? When damps arise out of the earth, is it the joy of thy soul that light springs down from heaven; or dost thou trust to the candle of the creature, which will burn blue and go out? Is Christ, man, or the world the door through which thy joys come in, the dish on which thou feedest with most delight? If Christ should give thee the long life of Methuselah, the strength of Samson, the beauty of Absalom, the wisdom, wealth, and renown of Solomon, and deny himself to thee, canst thou contentedly bear his absence, or wouldst thou say, as Haman in another case, and Absalom; 2 Sam. xiv. 24, 'All this availeth me nothing, so long as I may not see the king's face.' As Artabazus, when Cyrus gave him a cup of gold, and kissed Chrysantas, told the king, The cup thou gavest to me, was not half so good gold as the kiss thou gavest Chrysantas; so saith the living saint, when Christ blesseth him outwardly, and withdraweth himself from the soul: Lord, the cups, the wife and children, the food and raiment, the pleasures and treasures, all the earthly mercies thou givest to me, are not a quarter so good gold as the kiss of thy love which thou givest unto thy favourites. 'O kiss me with the kisses of thy mouth, for thy love is better than wine,' Cant. i. 'Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy children: O visit me with thy salvation; that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance,' Ps. cvi. 4, 5. 'Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name,' Ps. cxix. 132. These are the holy petitions of a gracious soul for a child's portion. Common mercies will never content them that have special grace, nor satisfy them that are sanctified indeed.

As the needle touched with the loadstone is restless, till it points toward the north, so the saint that is touched effectually by the

Spirit of God, is unquiet till he turn unto, and have fellowship with, Jesus Christ. He may flutter up and down, like the dove, over the waters of this world, but can find no rest for the soles of his feet, till he return to Christ, the true ark—till Christ put forth his hand and take him in, Gen. viii. 9. Then, and not till then, he crieth out, with the psalmist, 'Return to thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.'

Now, reader, what sayest thou? how is it with thee? Do thy affections, as the water of Jordan, overflow their banks at the time of thine earthly harvests? Joshua iii. 13; or, like the bird, dost thou then sing most merrily when thou art mounting up to heaven? Art thou willing to be served as the children of Abraham's concubines, put off with ordinary gifts? or must thou, like Isaac, have all, even Jesus Christ, or else thou esteemest thyself to have nothing? Gen xxv. 5, 6.

The fourth mark.

Is Christ the end of thy life? Is it thy main scope to live to him that died for thee? Doth the compass of thy soul without trepidation stand right to this pole, the glory of Jesus Christ? 'For none of us liveth to himself,' saith the apostle, 'and no man dieth to himself. But whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of dead and living,' Rom. xiv. 7–9. A sincere Christian dedicates his body, soul, name, estate, relations, interests, and his all to the glory of Christ, and wisheth he had something better to consecrate to him. As the Grecian told the emperor, If I had more, more would I give thee. So the saint desireth that he may believe more, and repent more, and hate sin more, and for this end, that he may exalt Christ more. The philosopher telleth us that means move by the goodness of their ends;[1] not by any absolute goodness of their own, but by their relative goodness, the goodness of their ends. As we take physic, not for physic's sake, but for health's sake; so duties and ordinances move a Christian to mind them, not so much for their own sake, as for their end's sake. He prayeth, fasteth, readeth, meditateth, that he may thereby and therein please, glorify, and enjoy the Lord Jesus Christ.

But now, a professor without the power of godliness hath another

[1] Media movent bonitate finis.

end. He goeth to church, but it is as the cut-purse, not to seek God, but his prey. He performeth duties, but either for self-credit, Mat. vi. 2—as Pliny observeth of the nightingale, that she will sing much longer and louder when men are by, than when they are not; —or else for self-profit, Mat. xxiii. 14. As that emperor who commanded all golden idols to be pulled down out of churches, not out of hatred to the idols, but out of love to the gold; and like him in the comedy, that cried out, O heavens, but pointed to the earth. Religion is either this man's stirrup, by which he hopes to get into the saddle above his neighbours, or else it is his stalking horse, which he contentedly followeth all day, because it may bring him in some gain at night. Like Satan, he may assume the shape of Samuel, but it is only upon some particular errand, and for his own ends. This man is not holy, but crafty, and doth not serve God, but himself of God. Reader, search whether thou art one of these: Thou art but an empty vine, if thou bringest forth fruit to thyself, Hosea x. 1. Oh how many a work, materially good, being fly-blown with self, proves formally bad, and so becomes stinking and unsavoury in the nostrils of God! Self is the pirate which too too often intercepteth the golden fleet of religious performances, that they cannot return freighted with blessings. It concerneth thee therefore to observe thy ends; what are thy ends in thy eating and drinking, and all thy natural and civil actions? Is thy end to please and gratify the flesh, or is it that thou mayest get health and strength, and thereby be the more serviceable to thy Maker and Redeemer? What is thy end in thy spiritual undertakings? is duty the end of duty, or is obedience to the honour of, and communion with, Christ the end of thy performances? Make a pause before thou readest farther, and answer the Lord, who commandeth thee to examine and know the state of thy soul.

CHAPTER X.

Other marks of saints.

But because I would willingly find thee out, whoever thou art, and have thee fully acquainted with thy spiritual condition, I shall desire thee to try thy spiritual condition by the efficient cause of it, and that is the Spirit of God. The Holy Ghost is called the Spirit of life, Rom. viii. 2, and indeed he only hath this spiritual life that hath this Spirit of life. As all the members of the natural body

are actuated and enlivened by the same human spirit from the head; so all the members of the mystical body are quickened and actuated by the same divine Spirit from their head, the Lord Jesus Christ. Mark, therefore, that one place in Rom. viii. 9, how full it is to this purpose; for upon that place the weight of all I have to speak further about this use of trial will depend. The words are these: 'But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you.' Mark, 'Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.' Observe, I beseech thee, 'If any man,' let him pretend never so much, let his privileges be never so many, let his profession be never so great, and his performances never so numerous, yet if he have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his; so that if the Spirit of Christ have not its habitation in thee, thou hast no spiritual relation to Jesus Christ.

Now I shall teach thee to know whether the Spirit be in thee or no, by two of its effects or properties; the first will be more general, the second more special.

The first mark.

The Spirit of God, if it be in thee, will purify thee, for it is a purifying Spirit. Sanctification is the proper work of the Spirit of Christ. It is called the Holy Ghost; and it is holy, not only subjectively, but effectively; it worketh holiness, and makes men holy, 1 Cor. vi. 11. It infuseth holy habits and principles into the soul, whereby it is enabled to fight with, and by degrees to foil, its corruptions; it changeth the understanding by illumination, the will by renovation, and the affections by sanctification; it doth not infuse new faculties into the soul, but it doth renew the old; it turneth the same waters into another channel—they ran before after the world and the flesh, but now after God and his ways; it is, as it were, the same viol, only it is new tuned; before it could make no music in praying or singing, but now it is so melodious that it delighteth the heart, and ravisheth the ear of God himself. The old moon and the new moon are the same, only the new hath a new endowment of light from the sun which it had not before; so it is here, the purified person is the same man he was before, only he hath a new endowment of the light of holiness which he had not before.

Now thus the Spirit ever worketh where it dwelleth; it is therefore called a river of living waters, John vii. 38, not a pond of dead, but a river of living, waters. A pond will suffer dirt and mud to continue in it without opposition; but a river of living waters

purgeth out, and casteth up, its mire and dirt, its foam and scum, Isa. lvii. 20. So the spirit of the world and flesh will let atheism, pride, and unbelief to lodge and lurk in the soul without resistance, unless it be a little from a natural conscience; but the Spirit of God worketh out these gradually, as generous wine worketh out lees and dregs. The Spirit is also called fire, Acts ii.; Mat. iii. 11; for as fire fighteth with the cold water that is over it, and by degrees conquereth it, and reduceth the water to its own likeness of heat, in some measure; so the Spirit lusteth and fighteth against the flesh, and by degrees overcometh the interest of it, captivateth the soul to the obedience of Christ, and conformeth the whole man, in some measure, to the image of God.

Examine thy soul by this; doth the Spirit within thee combat with and conquer thy corruptions? Doth it enable thee to cast them away with shame and detestation? Hath it turned the bent of thy heart and stream of thy affections after spiritual and heavenly things? The waters of the sea, as some write, though by their natural course they follow the centre, yet in obedience to the moon are subject to her motion, and so turn and return, ebb and flow. So though thou by nature didst follow the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life, yet in obedience to the Spirit dost thou now follow its motions? Hath the interest of the Spirit an actual predominancy in thy soul above the interest of the flesh? Canst thou say that the interest of the Spirit and the interest of the flesh do often meet together on a narrow bridge, where both cannot go forward together, and usually thou sufferest the Spirit to go forward, and the flesh to go back? When two masters walk together, and a servant followeth after, it is not easy to know to which of the two the servant belongs; but when the masters part, the servant is discovered whose he is. When religion and the world have their interests together, thou mayest be hid; but when thy credit and Christ, thy pleasure and the Spirit, come in competition, as they will very often, thou mayest discover thyself clearly whose servant thou art. Speak, friend, and let thy conscience witness whether it be thus or no. Thou mayest deceive, and thereby undo thyself, but thou canst not deceive God; for if the Spirit do not sanctify thee, the Son will never save thee. Pharaoh's court admitted of frogs and lice, and Noah's ark received unclean beasts into it; but no such vermin can crawl into the heavenly court: 'Into it can in no wise enter' (observe, reader, in no wise) 'anything that is defiled or unclean,' Rev. xxi. 27. These are the words of the true and living God. Canst thou think that thou hast the

Spirit of God, and shalt be a gainer by death, who art a servant of unrighteousness, who hast vainglory, covetousness, hypocrisy, carnal-mindedness within thee, and never mournest under them, as one heavy laden with them, nor longest after, nor usest diligently the means for deliverance from them?[1] Dost thou live a spiritual life, that, instead of being dead to sin, art dead in sin? and shalt thou arrive at heaven, who walkest in the road to hell? I assure thee, a king will sooner admit dunghill-rakers and privy-cleaners, in their nastiest, filthiest pickle, into his bed, than God will take thee, if thou be such a one, into heaven. No; heaven is for the holy, and for them only.

The second mark.

The Spirit of God is a praying spirit: it is called the spirit of grace and supplication, Zech. xii. 10; the spirit of adoption, Rom. viii. 15; and of his Son, whereby they that have it cry, Abba, Father, Gal. iv. 6.

As Christ in heaven makes intercession for them without them, Heb. vii. 25, so the Spirit of Christ on earth maketh intercession for them within them. God never had any still-born children. The fathers after the flesh sometimes have dumb children, but the Father of spirits never had any such. Man's invocation of God presently followeth upon God's effectual vocation of him. One of the first signs of spiritual life in Paul was spiritual breathing: 'Behold he prayeth,' Acts ix. 11; and it is observable that prayer is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending almost of all his epistles. And David was three times a day, Ps. lv. 17, nay, seven times a day, at this blessed duty, Ps. cxix. 164; yea, he was so wholly employed in it, that he speaketh as if he were altogether made up of it, Ps. cix. 4. But I [give myself unto] prayer, as it is read in our translations,[2] is added for explanation, as the different character sheweth, as if prayer had been his essential constitutive part.

Some write of Latimer, that he would pray so many hours, that he was not able to rise. Nazianzen saith of his sister Gorgonia, that she prayed so much, that her knees seemed to be grown to the very ground. Paul the hermit was found dead kneeling upon his knees, holding up his hands, and lifting up his eyes.[3] Constantine the emperor would not have his effigies set up as other

[1] Regeneratio gratuitam coram Deo justificationem individuo nexu comitatur, nec ab ea separari potest, etiamsi distingui debeat.—*Polan. Synag.*, lib. vi. cap. 37.

[2] Et Ego Oratio.—*Moller. Legit.*

[3] Jerome in Vit.

princes had, in his armour, leaning, but in a posture of prayer, kneeling.[1] Thus all the children of God are frequent at asking their heavenly Father's blessing. It is the character of the worst of sinners they call not on God, Ps. xiv. 4; a man once speechless is nigh unto death.[2]

Now ask thy soul, Doth the Spirit of God bring thee often upon thy knees? Art thou one of the generation of seekers? Ps. xxiv. 6. Art thou one of God's suppliants? Zeph. iii. 10. Dost thou know what it is to be poor in spirit, to be a beggar, and to live altogether upon the alms-basket of heaven's bounty? Is there a constant trade driven betwixt God and thy soul—God sending down mercies, and thou sending up prayers? This is the daily exchange. Canst thou better live without thy daily bread than this daily duty? When thy heart is big with grief, whither dost thou go? Is this thy great ease, that thou mayest empty thy soul into God's ears?

Are thy prayers fervent prayers? Is this holy fire put to thy daily sacrifices? Is thy prayer made without ceasing, or instantly? Acts xxvi. 7, ἐν ἐκτενείᾳ, stretched out upon the tenters, as the word signifieth; not so much in the length of the petitions, as in the acting of holy affections.[3]

Dost thou labour in prayer? Col. iv. 12, *i.e.*, wrestle with God, as the word imports, bending and straining every joint of the new man in the soul, that they may all help to prevail with God. Are all the heavenly forces within thee united when thou prayest, that, if possible, thou mayest take the kingdom of heaven by storm, by violence? Mat. xi. 12.

What sayest thou, reader? Dost thou, like the importunate widow, take no denial, but use a humble impudency,[4] as the word of Christ includeth, when thou art entreating the divine Majesty for spirituals? Or dost thou pray, but it is as if thou prayedst not—so dully and coldly, that thou canst hardly hear thyself? only, as it were, between sleeping and waking, thou mumblest over a few petitions, either out of custom, or to stop the mouth of conscience, never regarding whether God answer thy requests or no.

Didst thou but consider the dreadful majesty of that God to whom thou prayest, the invaluable worth of the soul, and endless

[1] Euseb.

[2] Quorum spiritus domiti sunt, et qui sese Deo subjiciunt (mendici spiritu.)—*Junius in Mat.* v. 3.

[3] ἀγονιζόμενοι; Rom. xii. 12, προσκαρτεροῦντες, instant in prayer, a metaphor from hunting dogs, which will not cease following the game till they have got it.

[4] ἀναίδεια, Luke xi. 8. Nazian. saith of his sister Gorgonia, that in prayer she was modestly impudent.

state for which thou prayest, and the poor pittance of time, upon which thy eternity dependeth, that thou hast to pray in, it might rouse thee out of thy security.

Common beggary, as it is the poorest, so it is the easiest trade. A whispering devotion is seldom answered with a loud echo from heaven, (Dr Arrow., Sermon on 1 Sam. vii. 12, p. 15;) but this special, as it is the richest, so it is the hardest. The fervent prayer is the prevalent prayer, James v. 16. The bullet will fly no farther than the force of the powder will carry it. That arrow of prayer that would hit the mark must be drawn with full strength. He that in prayer for grace, through a humble dependence on Christ, will not be denied, shall not be denied.

Lip labour doth no more than a windy instrument, makes a loud noise, and that is all. Prayer without the travail of the soul is but the cold carcase of a duty, and no wonder if it be unsavoury in God's nostrils. How many among us are there that pray every day for pardon and holiness, and yet shall die without them, and perish eternally for want of them, and all because they never begged them in good earnest, but were always indifferent whether God heard them or no. I would have such know that the blessed God valueth his special ware at a higher rate than to bestow it on such as will not esteem it something answerable to its worth.

It were easy to instance how fierce and fervent the children of God, in whom was this Spirit of God, (which is compared to fire,) have been in their supplications. Look Gen. xxxii. 24, 25; Ps. v., lxxvii., and lxxxviii. Jacob wrestled with God, and would not let him go unless he blessed him. Christ seemed willing to shake him off: 'Let me go,' saith Christ; 'I will not let thee go unless thou bless me,' saith Jacob.

My limbs may go, my life may go, but no going for thee without a pawn, without a blessing. Thus, indeed, doth the seed of Jacob seek the face of their God, and thence are called Israelites; for, as princes, they have power with God, and prevail, Gen. xxxii. 26, 27.

No day passed wherein Luther spent not three hours in prayer. Once it fell out that I heard him, saith Vitus Theodorus of him. Good God, what a spirit, what a confidence was in his very expressions! with such reverence he prayed as to a God, with such assurance as to a father or friend. The child hath escaped many a stripe by his loud cry. Heartless motions do but bespeak a denial, whereas fervent suits offer a sacred violence both to earth and heaven.

And this is the difference betwixt the prayer of a living and a

dead Christian: the prayer of the former is instant and fervent, not discouraged, but rather increasing, by opposition, as lime, by water cast upon it, burneth the hotter; see Mat. xv. 22, and xxv. 27: the latter is flat and indifferent, easily put off, though it be with a crumb instead of a crown, with a bubble, a butterfly, instead of the everlasting fruition of God.

Any temporal good is satisfying to them that have no true spiritual good in them, Ps. iv. 5; and the reason is clear. The breath of a pair of bellows is cold, because it doth not proceed from a living principle within; but the breath of a man is warm, because it cometh from a principle of life within. So the prayer, the breath, of a hypocrite is cold, because it doth not flow from the Spirit of God, the only inward principle of spiritual life; but the prayer, the breath, of a sincere saint is warm, is fervent, because it proceeds from this living principle, the Spirit of Christ within.

Indeed the Christian knoweth not how to pray as he ought, but the Spirit helpeth his infirmities with sighs and groanings which cannot be uttered, Rom. viii. 26.

Dost thou pray constantly? That duty which is done out of conscience will be done with perseverance. A godly man will seek God's face evermore, Ps. cv. 4, and cxvi. 2; he calleth upon God as long as he liveth. Breathing heavenward in prayer is the beginning and ending of his spiritual life upon earth, as we see in Paul, Acts ix. 6; and Stephen, Acts vii. 60. Paul begins his life with prayer, and Stephen ends his with it.

He never taketh his leave of prayer till he is entering into the place of praise. Prayer is his element; he cannot live without it, and communion with God in it. Prayer is the vessel by which he is continually trading into the holy land; he sendeth it out fraught with precious graces,—faith, hope, desire, love, godly sorrow, and the like; and it cometh home many times richly laden with peace, joy, and increase of faith.

But now a hypocrite, Job saith, will not pray always; he will not always call upon God, Job xxvii. 10. Possibly he may sometimes cry out, as a scholar under the rod, or a malefactor upon the rack, for deliverance out of some affliction; but when God openeth his hand, and bestoweth the mercy, his mouth is shut, and his heart too, that you shall hear but little more of this duty.

If he pray on his sick-bed, and God raise him up, he leaves his prayers sick a-bed behind him. His prayer was but a messenger sent about some particular errand; when that is done, the messenger returneth.

As that story of the friar speaketh, how, when he was a poor friar, he went ever sadly casting his eyes upon the ground; but being abbot, he went merrily, looking upward. One of his companions asked him the reason of that alteration: he answered, that when he was a common friar, he went dejected by looking downward for the keys of the abbey, which now he had found, and therefore left that posture.

So when a hypocrite hath the temporal good thing he desireth—for that usually is most desired by him—he hath his ends, and his prayer an end too.

Or if God do not hear him presently, he will not submit patiently, but often flingeth away in a rage, with that wicked king, Why should he wait upon the Lord any longer?

If there come not in present profit, he will give over his trade; as Tully said to his brother, that he would pray to the gods, but that they have given over to hear. Whereas a godly man will cry in the day, and not be silent in the night; he will direct his prayer to God, and look up, Ps. v. 3. He will pray and wait, wait and pray, as you see beggars in some places; they will beg and knit, knit and beg, and continue still begging and knitting. So a right beggar at God's door, he will pray and work, work and pray; he will believe and pray, hope and pray, read and pray, wait and pray; he knoweth that it is not good to limit the Holy One of Israel; but it is good that a soul should hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of God, Lam. iii. 26.

A divine[1] giveth me this simile, which doth excellently illustrate our present subject: Take some draught-horse, and he will draw when the load is coming; but if he feel it not coming, he will trample, and not draw; but take a horse of a right breed, and put his traces to a tree or a post, he will strain and strain, and die upon the place, before he will give over, though nothing comes.[2] So a rotten Christian, if he find no present gain coming, he gives over duty, fearing all is lost; but a right Christian will pray continually, 1 Thes. v. 17, whether God hear him presently or no; he knoweth that both the command of God and his own wants call upon him never to give over.

Besides, this spirit of prayer abides in him for ever, John xiv. 14, 16.

Examine thy heart by these marks faithfully, and do not, by flattery or self-love, or rather self-hatred, deceive thy soul—no

[1] Mr Car. on Job xxvii.

[2] Of Carolus Magnus it is said, Carolus plus cum Deo quam hominibus loquitur.

deceit like soul-deceit—but pass sentence upon thyself impartially, and if thou findest thy condition good, bless God, keep close to Jesus Christ, and labour that thou mayest walk worthy of the Lord, even unto all well-pleasing, Col. i. 10. The great and extraordinary privileges bestowed on thee do call aloud for gracious and extraordinary practices from thee.

How exemplary shouldst thou live among them, who art to live eternally with God! What singular things wilt thou do for that God, for that Saviour, that hath done such singular things for thy soul! Can any love be too much; can any labour be too great; can any honour be too high; can any service be too holy, for that God to whom thou art by millions of eternal obligations thus infinitely infinitely bound?

Oh, let the fruitfulness of thy heart and life in holiness proclaim thine abundant thankfulness for such mercies, as for weight and worth exceed the very thoughts of men and angels. How abundant shouldst thou be in the work of the Lord, when thou knowest that thy labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.

When thou art confessing thy sins, meditate on the choosing, calling love of that God against whom thy sins are committed, and try whether the heat of that burning love will not thaw thy heart, and dissolve it into tears when it is most hard and icy. When thou art backward to a duty that hath some difficulty in it, consider Jesus Christ was not backward to his bitter, bloody sufferings for thy sins.

As the soldier told Augustus when he denied his petition, I did not serve you so at the battle of Actium; so say to thy soul, Jesus Christ did not serve thee so when he was to drink the cup of his Father's fierce wrath for thee; and see whether such melting persuasions will not prevail with thee to subject thyself to the hardest precept.

When thou art departing away from God by any sinister course, or insincere carriage, remember who thou art—one that art called not to sin, but sanctity; not to uncleanness, but holiness.

As Antigonus, being invited to a place that might probably prove a temptation to sin, asked counsel of Menedemus what he should do; he bade him only remember he was a king's son. So do thou remember thine high and heavenly calling, and do nothing unworthy of the God that hath enrolled thy name in the book of life, that hath ransomed thy soul with the precious blood of his Son, and hath sanctified thee by the effectual operations of his Spirit, but walk worthy of the vocation wherewith, and whereunto, thou art called, Eph. iv. 1.

It is an excellent meditation of Eusebius Emissenus: Though the devil, saith he, should be damned for many sins, and I but for one, yet mine would exceed the devils' impiety. They never sinned against a God that became an angel for them; they never sinned against a Mediator that was crucified for them; but miserable and wretched I—and it is wonderful that my heart melteth not when it thinketh on it—I have sinned against a God that became a man for me, against a God that died an ignominious death for me; against a God that hath left me an example of love and holiness. I am more unworthy than the devils.

Consider it, friend: no sins admit of higher aggravation, nor are matter of deeper provocation, than the sins of those that are interested in God's special distinguishing affection. In a word—for I had not thought to have told thee so much; it was for the sake of others principally that I append this piece—since it shall be thy reward to be like an angel in happiness, ever to behold the face of the Father, let it be thy work and endeavour to be like an angel in holiness, to do the will of God on earth as it is in heaven, readily, heartily, and universally.

But if thou find, upon a thorough search, that thou art a stranger to this spiritual life, if conscience, sent to inquire, bring in this verdict, that this purifying, praying Spirit dwelleth not in thy soul, let me beseech thee, in the fear of the Lord, to bethink thyself what is like to become of thee for ever.

One of the martyrs put his finger into the candle, to try how he could endure the fire in which he was afterwards to be burnt. Do thou but read over again the former use of information, and consider whether thou art able to undergo that loss, and that terrible, intolerable, eternal wrath of an omnipotent God, which is therein declared, and by Scripture proved, to be the portion of all that live and die in thy condition.

Suppose thou shouldst hear a voice this hour, as that wicked pope did, Come, thou wretch, unto thy particular and eternal judgment,[1] what wouldst thou do? where wouldst thou appear? and where wouldst thou leave thy glory? Isa. x. 3. I would not for a world take thy turn. How is it possible that thou canst eat, or drink, or sleep with any quietness of mind; that in the day thy meat is[2] sauced with sorrow, and thy drink mingled with weeping; that in the night thou art not scared with dreams, and terrified with visions, when thy whole eternity dependeth upon that little

[1] Veni, miser, in judicium.

[2] Qu. 'is not?'—ED.

thread of life, which is in danger every moment to be cut asunder, and thou to drop into hell?

Art thou a man that hast reason, and canst thou be contented one hour in such a condition? Art thou a Christian, that believest the word of God to be truth, and canst thou continue one moment longer in that Sodom of thy natural estate, which will be punished with fire and brimstone?

I tell thee, didst thou and the rest of thy carnal neighbours but give credit to Scripture, thou and they too would sooner sleep in a chamber where all the walls round, the ceiling above, and floor below, were in a burning-light flame, than rest quietly one moment in thine estate of sin and wrath. But for thy sake, thy condition yet not being desperate, though very dangerous, that thou mightst avoid the easeless misery of the sinner, and attain the endless felicity of the saint, I have purposely written the next use, which I request thee, as thou lovest thy life, thy soul, thine unchangeable good, nay, I charge thee, as thou wilt answer the contrary at the great and dreadful day of the Lord Jesus, that thou read carefully, and that thou practise faithfully, the means and directions therein propounded out of the word of God.

CHAPTER XI.

The third use—viz., Exhortation to mind spiritual life.

Thirdly, My third use shall be of exhortation to those that are dead in sins to labour for this spiritual life. Whoever thou art that wouldst have gain by thy death, then get Christ to be thy life. Hast thou read of that fulness of joy, of those rivers of pleasures, of that exceeding and eternal weight of glory, of that kingdom that cannot be shaken, of that enjoyment of Christ, of that full immediate fruition of God, and in him of all good, of that perfect freedom from all evil which they, and only they, shall be partakers of who have this spiritual life? And is not thy heart inflamed with love to it?[1] thy soul enlarged in desire after it? thy will resolved to venture all, and undertake anything, for it? Surely, if thou art a man, and hast reason, thy will and affections will be carried out after things that are good; but if thou hast but a spark of Christianity, thou canst not but be exceedingly ravished with things so eminently, so superlatively, so infinitely good. The his-

[1] Extrema Christianorum desiderantur, etsi non exordia.—*Jer.*

torian observeth that the riches of Cyprus invited the Romans to hazard dangerous fights for the conquering it. How many storms doth the merchant sail through for corruptible treasures! How often doth the soldier venture his limbs, nay, his life, for a little perishing plunder! Reader, I am persuading thee to mind the true treasure, durable riches, even those which will swim out with thee in the shipwreck of death.

Stephen Gardiner said of justification by faith only, that it was a good supper doctrine, though not so good a breakfast one. So the power of godliness, this spiritual life, though it be not so pleasant to live in as to the flesh, yet it is most comfortable to die with.

When Moses had heard a little of the earthly Canaan, how earnestly doth he beg that he might see it: Deut. iii. 25, 'I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon.' Thou hast read a little of the heavenly Canaan, and hast thou not ten thousand times more cause to desire it?

Plato saith, If moral philosophy could be seen with mortal eyes, it would draw all men's hearts after it. May not I more truly say, If the gain of a saint at death could be seen with spiritual eyes, with the eye of faith, it would make all men in love with it, and eager after it. Balaam, as bad as he was, did desire to die the death of the righteous; and surely they that dislike their way, cannot but desire their end. But God hath joined them both together, and it is not in the power of any man to put them asunder; therefore, if thou wouldst die their deaths, thou must live their spiritual lives. Holiness is the seed out of which that harvest groweth. If thou wouldst be safe when thou shalt launch into the vast ocean of eternity, if thou wouldst be received into the celestial habitation, when thou shalt be turned out of thy house of clay, make sure of this life in Christ, Isa. ii. 12. If a heathen prince would not admit virgins to his bed before they were purified, canst thou think the King of kings will take thee into his nearest and dearest embraces before thou art sanctified? Believe it, heaven must be in thee before thou shalt be in heaven. Unless the Spirit of God adorn thy soul, as Abraham's servant did Rebecca, with the jewels of grace, thou art no fit spouse for the true Isaac, the Lord of glory.

The brutish worldling, indeed, would willingly live profanely, and yet die comfortably; dance with the devil all day, and sup with Christ at night; have his portion in this world with the rich man, in the other world with Lazarus. As the young swaggerer told his graceless companion, when they had been with Ambrose,

and seen him on his death-bed, nothing affrighted at the approach of the king of terrors, but triumphing over it, Oh that I might live with thee, and die with Ambrose![1] But this cannot be. A happy death is the conclusion of a holy life. The God who giveth heaven hath in great letters written in his word upon what terms, and no other, it may be had: 'He chooseth to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth,' 2 Thes. ii. 13.

It is as possible for thee to enjoy the benefit of the Son's passion, without the Father's creation, as without the Spirit's sanctification. Believe the word of truth: John iii. 3, 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;' and Heb. xii. 14, 'Follow holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.' Consider, friends, this is the word of the true and living God; and this law, this standing law of heaven, is like the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be altered; not one jot or tittle of it can possibly go unfulfilled, Mat. v. 18. Darest thou think that the God of truth will be found a liar for thy sake, as he must be if he save thee in thy sinful, unconverted state? I tell thee, the God of holiness and justice will send millions of such carnal wretches as thou art to hell, there to suffer the vengeance of the unquenchable fire, before he will stain his honour in the least. No, he is more tender of his glory than so. Though thou carest not how much thou trample his honour in the dust by the wilful breach of his commands, yet he is exceeding jealous of his great name; and when his very being is engaged for the accomplishment of his word, he will not ungod himself to glorify thee in an unsanctified condition; and therefore do not delude thy soul in presuming that he that made thee will not damn thee; for he saith himself, that unless thou art new made, and hast that true understanding to fear his majesty, and depart from iniquity, he that made thee will not save thee, and he that formed thee will shew thee no mercy, Isa. xxvii. 11. I hope, therefore, thou art fully convinced that it highly concerneth thee to be night and day, with the greatest diligence imaginable, labouring for this spiritual life, when thine everlasting comfort in the other world, thine eternal life, dependeth so much upon it.

[1] There is a story of one that, being reproved for his vicious life, and persuaded to mind godliness, would answer often, That it was but saying three words at his death, and he was sure to have eternal life. Probably his three words were, *Miserere mei Deus;* but he riding one day over a bridge, his horse stumbled, and as both were falling into the river, he crieth out, *Capiat omnia diabolus,* Horse and man and all to the devil. As he lived, so he died, with three words, but not such as he hoped to have had.

Art thou rich? hearken to this word of counsel from God, look after these durable riches, Prov. viii. 18. Thy earthly riches are not for ever, Prov. xxvii. 24. Though thy heart possibly is more set upon thy houses and hoards than upon heaven, yet thou must take thine everlasting leave of them ere long; when these unsearchable riches in Christ, which I am persuading thee to mind, outlive the days of heaven, run parallel with the life of God and line of eternity, Prov. viii. 18; nay, till thou livest this spiritual life, all thy wealth is want, all thy glory is ignominy, all thy comforts are crosses, yea, curses to thee, Prov. i. 32; Ps. lxix. 22.

All thy outward comforts, like the rainbow, shew themselves in all their dainty colours, and then vanish away; or, if they stay with thee till death, then they die with thee. Oh how hath the moon of great men's plenty often been eclipsed at the full, and the sun of their pomp gone down at noon!

Through the corruption of thy heart they prove but fuel for thy lusts on earth; and if thou shouldst die, having only this world's goods, they will feed the eternal fire in hell. It is storied of Heliogabalus that he had silken halters to hang himself with, ponds of sweet water to drown himself in, and gilded poison to poison himself. Truly more hurtful are the world's trinity, riches, honours, and pleasures, to them that have great estates in the world, but no estate in the covenant. Poison worketh more furiously in wine than in water, and so doth corruption many times bewray itself more in plenty than in poverty. It is sad that thou shouldst not be led to God by that which came from God. But oh how lamentable is it that thou shouldst, Jehu-like, fight against thy Master with his own soldiers; like the dunghill, the more the sun shineth on it, it sends forth the more stinking savour; that thou shouldst, by the riches which his Majesty hath given thee, only have this cursed advantage, to be the greater rebel.[1] Many good works hath Christ done for thee; for which dost thou stone him? John x. 32; for which of them dost thou stone him out of thy house? By oaths, or drunkenness, or gaming, or by atheism and irreligion, or at least by putting him off with a few short, cold, formal prayers, and that but now and then neither. Many good works hath he done for thee; for which of them dost thou stone him out of thy heart? By letting the world, and the things of the world, have the highest seat there, the throne thy chiefest esteem, warmest love,

[1] The poet feigned Pluto to be the god of riches and hell, as if they had been inseparable.—*Homer.*

and strongest trust? What sayest thou? is it not thus? And is this to be led by his goodness to repentance? Oh consider thy body's mercies are holy baits laid by God to catch thy soul. He trieth the vessel with water, to see whether it will hold wine. Do not, like the foolish fly, burn thyself in this flame of love; turn not his grace into wantonness, but let the kindness of God be salvation unto thee. Thou shouldst, by those cords of love, be drawn nearer unto him, and by those bands of mercies be tied closer to his commands. How shouldst thou gather; if the streams of creatures be so sweet, what sweetness is there in God, who is the fountain. If he be so good in temporals, surely he is better in spirituals, and best of all in eternals. How unsatisfied shouldst thou be with all these outward gifts, which may consist with his everlasting hatred, and resolve, with Luther, not to be put off with the blessings of his left hand, of his footstool.[1] Thou hast the more cause to look about thee, because few of thy rank are truly religious. A little godliness will go a great way with great men, though of all men they have most obligations from God. See James ii. 5, God 'chooseth the poor of the world rich in faith, and heirs of his kingdom;' and Christ telleth us, 'it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven,' Mat. xix. 24. Our Saviour, indeed, doth not speak of an impossibility, but of the difficulty of it, and the rareness of it. Job unfolded the riddle, and got through the needle's eye with three thousand camels. But it is hard to be wealthy, and not wanton; too too often are riches, like bird-lime, hindering the soul in its flight towards heaven. A load of earth hath sunk many a soul to hell; and the enriching of the outward occasioned the impoverishment of the inward man. A rich man is a rare dish at heaven's table. Blessed be God there are some, but surely few rich of those very few that shall be saved, 1 Cor. i. 26. The weighty burden in a vessel, though it consisted of the most precious commodities, hath not seldom caused its miscarriage, when otherwise it had arrived safely at its desired haven. As the moon, when she is at the full, is farthest from, and in most direct opposition to, the sun, so it is the temper of most in thy condition to be farthest from, and most opposite to, Christ, when they receive the most light of prosperity from him, and are fullest of the blessings of his goodness. Take heed thou be not like the horse and mule, Ps. xxxii. 9, to drink plentifully of the streams, and never look to the fountain; but let thine eyes, as the church's, be doves' eyes.

[1] Valde protestatus summe nolle sic ab eo satiari.—*Melch. Adam, vit. Luth.*

When the dove hath pecked her corn, she turneth her eyes heavenward; she looketh up, Cant. i. 15.

It is reported of the Spartans, that they use to choose their king every year, during which year he liveth in all abundance, but is, after the year be expired, banished into some remote place for ever. One king, knowing this, being called to be king, did not, as others, prodigally spend his revenues, but heaped up all the treasure he could get together, and sent it before to that place whither he should be banished; and so, in the year of his government, made a comfortable provision for his whole life. So wise are they that lay up a treasure in heaven against the time of their departure out of this world.

Art thou poor? Labour for this spiritual life; it will make thee rich indeed. Thou hast little on earth, but thou mayest have a treasure in heaven. God offereth thee grace, Christ, and life, as freely as others; take heed thou neglect them not, and think, as they in Sweden, that it is only for gentlemen to keep the Sabbath; that it is only for gentlemen to mind religion. Thou hast a soul to save, an endless estate to provide for, a hell to escape, a heaven to attain, a dreadful day of judgment to prepare for, as well as they. It is a great mercy, that though God difference thee from others in temporals, yet not in spirituals. Among the Israelites, the price for their ransom was equal, half a shekel; and the rich shall not give more, nor the poor less, Exod. xxx. 12, 15, 16, thereby signifying,[1] that the same price was paid by Christ for the redemption of all, poor as well as rich, and that the virtue and merits of Christ's passion belong equally to all. Thy outward condition doth not exclude thee from an interest in Christ's death and intercession. Poor Lazarus may lie in the bosom of rich Abraham. The poor may be gospelised, as that Mat. xi. 5 is sometimes read; not only have the gospel preached to them, but be changed by it. God accepted the lamb and dove in sacrifice, when he rejected the lion and eagle. But thou must be one of God's poor, not of the devil's ragged regiment. Will it not be sad for thee to have two hells; one on earth, in cold, hunger, thirst, and wants, and another in hell, in heat and unspeakable woe? How many of thy condition serve the devil and the world all their days in drudgery and slavery, and are turned into hell as a sumpter horse at the night of death, after all his hard travel, with his back full of galls and bruises.

A low man, if his eye be clear, may look as high as the tallest; the least pigmy may from the lowest valley see the sun as fully as

[1] Willet *in loc.*

a giant upon the highest mountain.[1] Christ is now in heaven; it is not the smallness of our person, nor the meanness of our condition, that can let us from beholding him. The soul hath no stature, neither is heaven to be had with reaching. If God clear the eyes of our faith, we shall be high enough to behold him.

Do not say, thou art to provide for thy wife and children, and hast no time to regard thy soul in a solemn, serious performance of duties. Remember the same God that commandeth thee to follow thy particular calling as a man, enjoineth thee likewise to follow thy general calling as a Christian; and that, in the first place, 'Seek first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, and all other things shall be added to you,' Mat. vi. 33; and also with the greatest labour: John vi. 27, Phil. ii. 12, 'Labour not for the food that perisheth, but for the food that endureth to everlasting life.'

Where our Saviour doth not indeed absolutely forbid labour for the body, but comparatively; labour for the food that perisheth is not prohibited, but labour for the meat which endureth to everlasting life is preferred. Thy labour for thy soul should be so much, so great, that thy labour for thy body should be no labour at all, not deserve the name of labour in comparison of it. Now consider what answer thou wilt make to the great God when he shall plead with thee for the breach of these commands; besides, hast not thou many spare hours in many evenings, and on wet days, wherein thou mightst go to God in secret, and with thy family, and humble thy soul in a mournful confession of thy sins, and sensible apprehension of the wrath which is due to thee, and wherein thou mightst be importunate for pardon and grace, without which thou art lost for ever? Nay, the Lord knoweth how many Lord's days thou hast enjoyed, which days he hath set apart, as well out of mercy as out of sovereignty, not only for the glory of his name, but also for the good of thy soul, wherein thou mightst both publicly, privately, and secretly, have furthered thy spiritual and eternal good. But how dost thou squander away those precious hours, sometime in corporal labour, always in spiritual idleness, in sleeping, or sitting at thy door, or talking with thy neighbours, and yet thou hast no time for thy soul.

But, lastly, Tell me, hast thou time to eat, and drink, and work, and sleep, and no time to work out thy salvation, to fit thy soul for death, for judgment, for eternity? If thy house were in a flame, thou wouldst not let it burn, and say, I have no time to quench it.

[1] B. Hall, Contempl.

If thy neighbour call thee to sit, or talk, or dine, or, it may be, to go to the alehouse with him, thou dost not answer him, I must provide for my family, I have no time; but when thy Maker and preserver, the blessed God, calleth upon thee, by his Spirit and word, to be diligent for the making thy calling and election sure, 2 Pet. i. 10, thou must provide for thy family, thou hast no time for this. Foolish worm, leave off thy vain and cursed pretences, and set upon the business for which thou wast sent into the world, even the glorifying and obeying the Lord, or thou shalt have another manner of answer to thy simple excuses from the judge of quick and dead, when, for thy want of time to serve him in, he shall give thee an eternity to suffer in.

Reader, I have two things to desire of thee, before I deliver thee the directions which I have received of the Lord for thee; and indeed unless thou grant me, or rather God and thy soul, these two requests, all that I have to say will be to no purpose at all. My requests are, that thou wouldst follow the counsel of God, in order to the recovery of thy soul out of its bottomless misery with all speed and with all diligence. Now, because they are of such exceeding importance, that, if thou art once persuaded to them, my work will be half effected; and because delays and laziness are the two great gulfs in which such multitudes of souls are drowned and perish, I shall speak the more to them.

CHAPTER XII.

The life in Christ must be minded speedily, with the grounds of it.

My first request to thee is, that thou wouldst presently set about the affairs of thy soul. We say of things that must be done, there needeth not any deliberation about them.[1] Is not this the one thing necessary, to prepare for the last hour, to make sure of thine everlasting welfare? If thou believest the word of God, thou wilt not give the flesh so much breath as to debate it, much less wilt thou, as Felix did, put off the thoughts of righteousness and judgment to come, till thou art at better leisure, till thou hast a more convenient season.[2] What more weighty work hast thou to do, than to work out thy own salvation? Is the following thy calling, hoarding up a heap of earth, feeding, clothing that flesh which shall shortly be

[1] De rebus necessariis non est deliberandum.

[2] In re tam justa nulla est consultatio.

food for worms; is any of these half so necessary as thy provision for eternity?

If thou art old, it is high time to begin to prepare for thy latter end. Thou hast the feet of thy body almost already in the earth, in the grave; and hadst thou not need have the feet of thy soul, thy affections, in heaven? Thou hast but a little time to converse with men; doth it not behove thee to be much in communion with God? Death often, possibly, knocketh at thy door by the hand of sickness, and warneth thee to look after another habitation, for thou art to be turned out of thy house of clay. Dost thou take warning? what wilt thou do if thou shouldst die before thou didst ever begin to live—if the sun of thy life should set before the sun of righteousness hath arisen on thee? All the while thou livest thou art dead, and thou livest long to add to thy torments, as others have died soon to hasten them. Thou art but like stubble, laid out a-drying to burn the better in hell, all the while thou continuest a stranger to the new birth.

Thou hast every day been treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, Rom. ii. 5; been gathering, as it were, more wood to increase those flames in which thou, if thou thus diest, shalt live for ever. 'Because judgment against an evil work is not speedily executed, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. Though a sinner do evil a hundred times, and his days be prolonged, it shall not go well with the wicked,' Eccles. viii. 11, 12, 13. 'The sinner an hundred years old shall be accursed,' Isa. lxv. 20.

I have read of the Circassians, a kind of mongrel Christians, that they divide their time betwixt the devil and God, dedicating their youth to robbery, and their old age to repentance. How much time hast thou spent in the service of sin! how little time hast thou lost for the service of God and thy soul! Is it not high time for thee to number thy days, and to apply thy heart unto wisdom speedily?

Old sinner, dost thou not tremble to think that there is but a step betwixt thee and death! nay, betwixt thee and hell. Oh the time, and talents, and opportunities which thou hast to reckon for more than others! Happy, happy had it been for thee to have been turned out of the womb into hell, rather than to die an old man, and not a babe in Christ. If thou hast a spark of love to thyself, mind thine inward change presently, lest thy change come, even death, and send thee to unchangeable misery.

If thou art young, mind the gathering the manna of godliness in

the morning of thine age; present the first-fruits of thy life to that God who desireth the first ripe fruits,[1] Exod. xxii. 29. The firstlings are his darlings, Gen. iv. 4; and that cloth will keep colour best that is dyed in the wool; the vessel will scent longest of that liquor with which it is first seasoned. Let thy soul, like Gideon's fleece, drink up betimes the dews of grace. As young as thou art, thy life is every moment at the mercy of the Lord. There is a saying, that in Golgotha there are skulls of all sizes. In the churchyard thou mayest see graves of all sorts, and some of thy very length; thou art concerned, therefore, to remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth. Aquinas telleth us, the young man hath death at his back, the old man before his eyes, and that is the more dangerous enemy that pursueth thee, than that which marcheth up towards thy face. This calleth for the greater care and watchfulness. In the Isle of Man the maids spin their winding-sheets the first thing they spin; do thou in youth and health ponder and prepare for thy death, lest, as young and strong as thou art, death trip up thy heels and throw thee, and it prove thine everlasting overthrow.

Besides, canst thou imagine that such a sinner deserveth favour, who cometh in to serve God at last, when he can serve his lust no longer? Is it equal (be thy own judge) to give the flower of thine age, the spring of thy life, the best of thy time, thine health and strength, to the devil and thy brutish flesh, and to give the dregs, the snuff, the bottom of all this, to the infinitely glorious God, whose creature thou art, at whose cost and charge thou livest every day and night, and who calleth upon thee for thy service, not for the need he hath of thee, but because of the need thou standest in of him, all whose happiness doth consist in the pleasing and enjoying his majesty?

Whoever thou art, of what age soever, either set speedily about thy soul work, or answer these few questions the Lord shall put to thee, or be speechless and without excuse at the day of Christ.

First, Hath not God waited upon thee long enough already? Wouldst have him, whom the heavens and heaven of heavens cannot contain, who hath millions of glorious angels waiting on his majesty, to wait on thee, miserable worm, always?

I tell thee, all the while thou art sinning his eyes behold thee, his heart is incensed against thee, and his hand can reach thee and avenge him on thee every moment, How many hath he sent into hell that never tasted of his patience, as thou hast done. The angels sinned, and were not waited upon one hour for their repent-

[1] Honor adolescentum est, timorem Dei habere.—*Ambros. de Offic.*

ance; yet how many years hath he endured thee with much long-suffering, and still waiteth upon thee, that he may be gracious unto thee! Isa. xxx. 18. The last oath thou didst swear, he could have cursed and rotted thy tongue. The last time that thou wentest prayerless to thy rest, he could have sent thee to little ease, to the place where there is no rest day or night. The last time thou didst quench the motions of his Spirit, and stifle the convictions of thy conscience, he could have taught thee by experience what is the meaning of the worm that never dieth, and the fire that goeth not out; and yet he spareth thee, stretching out his hands all the day long to a rebellious child, Isa. lxv. 2. Should not his long patience quicken thee to speedy repentance? Answer God whether he hath not waited enough, been long-suffering enough already; and if he have not, continue in thy ungodly course, and see who shall suffer longest at last, he or thou. It is one thing to forbear a debt, another thing to forgive the debtor. The longer God is in fetching his hand about, the heavier his blow will be when he striketh. The threatening is like a child, the longer it is kept in the womb the bigger it groweth, and it will put thee to the more pain when it cometh to the birth of its execution; therefore, bethink thyself before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon thee, Zeph. ii. 2.

Dost thou not see in the Scriptures many examples of God's severity upon the abuse of his patience? What became of Sodom and Gomorrah, when God waited in the days of Lot? Are they not suffering the vengeance of eternal fire? Jude 7. What became of the Jews, upon whom Christ waited, calling upon them, and crying to them to return and reform? is not wrath come upon them to the utmost? 1 Thes. ii. 16. Are not these like the mast of a ship sunk in the sands, standing up to warn thee to avoid their course, lest thou sink eternally? Have not these the same inscription on them with Sennacherib's tomb, Look on me, and learn to be godly? Do not the Sodomites seem to say, Look on us, and learn to be godly? Do not thy atheistical neighbours in hell, that thought they had had time enough before them, and futured their repentance, cry, Oh look on us and learn to be godly, and that with speed! Friend, take example by others, lest thou be made an example to others. To-day, after so long a time, if thou wilt hear his voice, harden not thy heart, Heb. iv. 7.

My second question which I desire thee to answer is, Hast thou not served the world and the flesh long enough already? Is it not yet time to serve God? hath not lust had too much of thy heart,

and the flesh of thy life, already? may not the time past of thy life suffice thee to have wrought the will of the flesh? 1 Peter iv. 3. Canst thou have the face to say, with the sluggard, a little more slumber, a little more sleep, a little more drunkenness, a little more swearing, a little more wickedness? Is not the debt which thou owest to divine justice great enough? Is not the heap of wrath and fury which thou hast provided for thyself against death and judgment big enough? Dost thou think that thou mayest serve the flesh too little, and the Lord too much? It may be thou hast served the devil twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, or seventy years, and knowest not whether thou shalt have so many hours to serve God in, and is it not yet time to begin? Answer me, Hast thou not wallowed long enough in the mire of atheism, worldliness, and sensuality? 'Wilt thou not yet be made clean? ah, when shall it once be?' Jer. xiii. 27.

3. If one should offer thee a house and land, or a bag of money, wouldst thou not presently accept it? wouldst thou say, I am not yet at leisure, hereafter will be time enough? And is there not infinitely more reason why thou shouldst presently close with Christ, and leave thy sins, and seek the kingdom of heaven? Is not heaven more worth than earth? are not the fruits of Christ better than silver, and his revenues than choice gold? Prov. iii. 15.

When gold is offered thee, saith Ambrose, thou dost not say, I will come again to-morrow and take it, but art glad of present possession; but salvation being proffered to our souls, few men haste to embrace it.

Is it not a sordid slighting of Jesus Christ the Lord of glory, for thee to be more ready and hasty to take a little perishing wealth, than his most precious blood?

Canst thou read the story of Pope Gregory the Seventh, how he made the emperor Henry the Fourth, with his wife and child, to stand bare-feet and bare-legged three days and three nights in a cold frosty season, before he would admit them into the house, and thy heart not rise against the pope's pride and wickedness? And why doth it not rise against thy own obstinacy and vileness, that hast suffered the King of kings to stand knocking at the door of thy heart till his head hath been wet with the dew, and his locks with the drops of the night? and though he hath waited thus many years, yet thou hast denied him entrance, and art not to this hour resolved to give him speedy acceptance.

4. Dost thou not find by experience that the longer thou delayest, the farther thou wanderest from God and holiness, and the more

unfit thou art for, and the more unwilling unto, the work of conversion? Is it not time therefore to turn with speed, when continuance in sin insensibly hardeneth thy heart, and gradually indisposeth it more to the work of repentance? As the ground, so is thy heart; the longer it lieth fallow, not ploughed up, the harder it will be. Wilt thou go one step farther from God, when thou must certainly come back every step, and that by Weeping-cross all the way, or be damned for ever? The purchase of heaven is like buying the sibyl's prophecies, the longer thou holdest off, the dearer. A stain which hath been long in clothes is not easily washed out; a house that hath long run to ruin will require the more cost and labour for its reparation; diseases that have been long in the body are cured, if at all, yet with much difficulty. The devil which had possessed the man from his infancy was hardly cast out, and not without much renting and raging, Mark ix. 21, 26. Satan thinks his evidence as good as eleven points at law, now he hath once got possession; and the longer he continueth commander-in-chief in the royal fort of thy heart, the more he fortifieth it against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty. All the while thou delayest, God is more provoked, the wicked one more encouraged, thy heart more hardened, thy debts more increased, thy soul more endangered, and all the difficulties of conversion daily more and more multiplied upon thee, having a day more to repent of, and a day less to repent in.

5. Canst thou promise thyself the next hour to repent in, and darest thou defer it to another hour? Thou sayest thou wilt mind these things when thou art old; but what if thou diest while thou art young? thou deferrest it till to-morrow,[1] but suppose thou die to-day, and God say to thee, as to the rich fool, 'This night thy soul shall be required of thee?' 'Boast not thyself of to-morrow; thou knowest not what a day may bring forth,' Prov. xxvii. 1.

It is a good saying of Aquinas, That though God promise forgiveness to repenting sinners, yet God promiseth not to-morrow to repent in. Think how many hundred casualties thou art liable to, how many others die suddenly,[2] and take the counsel of Michal to David, Save thyself to-night, to-morrow thou mayest be slain. Save thy soul to-day, to-morrow thou mayest be damned.

6. Art thou sure that God will accept thee hereafter, if thou

[1] It was a wise answer of one that was invited to dinner on the morrow, saith he, A multis annis crastinum non habui.

[2] Waldus, he the father of the Waldenses, seeing one suddenly fall down dead, was converted, went home, and became a new man.

shouldst now delay and dally with his Majesty? It is good seeking the Lord while he may be found, and calling upon him while he is near, Isa. lv. 6. There is a time when men shall call, but God will not hear; cry, but he will not answer; and that because when God called they would not hear, but did set at nought his counsel, Prov. i. 24, 29. Whilst thine eyes are open, the things which concern thy peace may be hid from them, Luke xix. 42. Thou mayest live to have thy soul buried long before thy body, Ezek. xxiv. 13, 14. God would purge thee now, and thou wilt not; take heed he clap not the same curse upon thee, which he did on some others, that thou shalt never be purged till thou diest. The Spirit of God probably now stirreth thee to turn presently, and offereth thee its help; if thou lovest thy soul, do not now deny it, lest the Spirit serve thee as Samuel did Saul; Saul disobeyed him, and Samuel came no more to Saul to the day of his death, 1 Sam. xv. 35, *i.e.*, never. So take heed of quenching this motion of the Holy Ghost, lest it depart in a distaste, taking its everlasting leave of thee, and thou never feel it more to the day of thy death: 'Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation,' 2 Cor. vi. 2. 'This day if thou wilt hear his voice, harden not thy heart, lest he swear in his wrath that thou shalt never enter into his rest,' Ps. xcv. 7–11.

CHAPTER XIII.

This life in Christ must be minded diligently, with some motions to it.

My second request is, that thou wouldst make the attaining this spiritual life the whole business of thy natural life, that thou wouldst esteem it as the great end of thy creation, preservation, and of all the mercies and means of grace which God bestoweth on thee, as the great end why God is so patient towards thee, so provident over thee, so bountiful unto thee, that thou mightst repent and return unto him from whom thou hast gone astray.

Shall I entreat thee, for the sake of thy poor soul, to let thy greatest labour be for thine eternal welfare! Is not this a business of the greatest necessity, of the greatest excellency, and of the greatest commodity and profit that thou didst ever undertake?[1] To be everlastingly in heaven or in hell, to enjoy endless and match-

[1] It is the *unum necessarium*, Luke xxiv. The *primum quærendum*, Mat. vi. 33. The *totum hominis*, Eccles. xii. 13.

less pain or pleasure, are other manner of things than men dream of. Good Lord! that men did but believe what it is to be happy or miserable for ever, how then would they fly from the wrath to come, and strive to enter in at the strait gate! Mat. vii. 14. Surely things of the greatest weight call for the strongest work; matters that concern thine unchangeable felicity, require the greatest industry.

The philosopher would not buy repentance at too dear a rate;[1] sure I am thou canst never buy this inheritance too dear, though thou spendest all thy time, and strength, and sellest all thou hast to purchase it. Friend, if ever thou art saved, thou must work out thy own salvation, Phil. ii. 12. God giveth the earth to the meek and patient, but heaven to the strong and violent, Mat. v. 5, and xi. 12. It is a saying of Lombard, God condemns none before he sins, nor crowns any before he overcomes. The blind, carnal world thinks that a man may go to heaven without so much ado. As Judas said of the ointment, so they of diligence in duties, 'To what purpose is this waste?' Mat. xxvi. 8. They tell us it is waste time to pray so frequently, and it is waste strength to pray so fervently: 'To what purpose is this waste?' They presume that godly men might spare a great deal of their pains heavenward. As Seneca told the Jews that they lost a seventh part of their time by their sanctification of the Sabbath; so the earthly-minded man will tell us that such and such men spend all their time almost in reading, or hearing, or praying, or instructing their families, or neighbours, and they count it but lost time. These men, if you will believe them, have found out an easier and a nearer way to heaven than ever Jesus Christ did; they are the right brood of wicked Jeroboam, that told the people, 1 Kings xii. 28, it was too much to go up to Jerusalem to worship; he had found out a cheaper and an easier way of worship. The calves at Dan and Bethel would save them much labour, and, in his conceit, serve to as much purpose. Thus they delude themselves that their lazy, cold trading God-ward, their slight indifferent prayers, will bring them in as much gain as the most zealous performances of the saints. But, reader, I hope thou wilt obey the voice of God, and not of men, in this: consider his promise is to the laborious, 'They that seek him early, shall find him,' Prov. viii. 17.

'He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him,' Heb. xi. 6; so Prov. ii. 3, 4. His precept is for labour. 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate,' Mat. vii. 13. 'Be diligent to make your calling

[1] Demost., Non tanti emam pœnitere.

and election sure,' 2 Pet. i. 10; so John vi. 27. Nay, he curseth them that put him off with their lame sacrifices: 'For I am a great king, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful,' Mal. i. 14. Further, he is peremptory that the slothful shall be for utter darkness,[1] Mat. xxv. 26. The Egyptian king would have men of activity and industry to be his servants; and will God, thinkest thou, who is a pure act, accept of those that are not active? Canst thou imagine that he should ever bestow pardon of sin, eternal life, the sanctification of the Spirit, the precious contents of his own promise, the invaluable fruits of Christ's purchase, upon those that do not judge them worthy of all their strength and time, and hearts and pains, and ten thousand times more? Besides, for what reason dost thou suppose God to have given thee these things? Surely thou canst not be so brutish as to think that the great God made thee, and serveth thee daily with such variety of mercies, health, strength, food, raiment, influences of heaven, and fruits of the earth, only, or chiefly, that thou shouldest eat and drink, and follow thy calling, and provide for thy family. Were such low ends the ground of his kindness? Or is it not that thou mightst ravish that pure and virgin inheritance, by a holy and heavenly violence, that thou mightst employ them and improve them to the utmost about his service and thy own salvation?

Reader, I must desire thee to consider and grant me these two or three suppositions, in prosecution of this my second request to thee.

1. Suppose thou hadst seen the Son of man, who now sitteth at his Father's right hand, rising from his place, and attended with the thousand thousands that are before him, and with the ten thousand times ten thousand that minister to him, coming and sparkling so gloriously through the firmament, that he dazzleth the very eyes of the sun, and makes him to hide his head for shame, and sitting down in the clouds, with the glory of his Father, 'a fire devouring before him, and behind him a flame burning.'

Conceive now with me, that thou hearest him call to the archangel, Sound the last trump, that the dead may arise and come to judgment. Hark to the sound of the trump!—how it rendeth rocks, melteth mountains, breaks in pieces the bands of death, and bursts asunder the gates of hell; how it pierceth the ocean, and fetcheth from the bottom of the sea the dust of Adam's seed; how it descendeth into the belly of the earth, and forceth it to vomit up

[1] Agathocles got to be king of Sicily by his industry. So may the Christian by violence attain the kingdom of heaven.

all the bodies which it had ever taken down; how it openeth the marble tombs of princes and potentates, and makes their highness and majesty stoop as low as the meanest to the King of glory.

Dost thou not see the bodies of the saints? Look how they fly upon the wings of the wind to their souls, and both to the bosom of their beloved Saviour. See how the spirits of unregenerate ones leave for a little while the dark vault of hell, and enter, though most unwillingly, into the stinking carrion of their bodies, and both hauled by angels to the judgment-seat of Christ.

When the court is thus set, conceive the commission read, wherein Jesus Christ is authorised, in his human nature, by his divine power, to be judge of the quick and dead. The law is produced, both of nature and Scripture. The books are opened, both of God's omniscience and man's conscience, by which all men are to be tried for their everlasting lives and deaths.

The holy ones are now called; their persons, through the righteousness of Christ, acquitted by public proclamation, before God, angels, and men; their performances, duties, graces, services, sufferings, punctually related to their glory, and infinitely rewarded in their perfect freedom from all evil, and eternal fruition of the chiefest good.

Behold, how the unholy are with violence dragged to the bar, examined strictly by the covenant of works, have all their sins, secret, open, personal, relative, of nature, and practice, in thoughts, words, and deeds, revealed publicly, and aggravated fully with all their crimson-dyed, bloody circumstances. Hark how pitifully they plead what poor evidences they had for salvation, what sorry excuses for atheism and abominations; their conscience, instead of a thousand witnesses, accuseth them, the law casteth them, the judge pronounceth against them a most severe sentence of condemnation, the devils seize on them for its speedy execution. Now what confusion and shame of face, what lamentation and sorrow of heart, possesseth them! What doleful screechings! What bitter yellings are heard among them! Here is the body cursing the soul for being so ungodly a guide, and the soul cursing the body for being so unready an instrument; and both cursing the time that ever they met together, and wishing, though in vain, that they might for ever be parted asunder.

Now the worldling curseth his flocks and his farm, his gold and his silver, that had more of his heart, and of care and time, than his precious soul. Now the lazy Christian curseth his madness and folly, that he should think a little formal preparation were sufficient

for such a strict examination. A bloody husband hast thou been to me, saith the wife; thou mindest provision for me for a little time, and never regardedst my instruction about the things of eternity. A cruel father hast thou been to me, saith the child, for generating me a child of wrath and heir of hell, and never endeavouring my regeneration, whereby I might have been a child of God and an heir of heaven: and thus cursing, crying, roaring, raging, they are sent to the place where is mourning without mirth, sorrow without solace, darkness without light, death without life, pure wrath without mixture, perfect pain without measure, nothing but weeping and wailing, sighing, sobbing, and gnashing of teeth, for ever, ever, ever.

Suppose, I say, that thou hadst heard and seen all this, and God should after it try thee in this world forty years, wouldst thou not night and day be struggling and striving with God by prayer, watching over thy own heart, waiting upon thy Saviour? With what earnestness wouldst thou pray! With what seriousness wouldst thou read and hear! With what exactness and exemplariness wouldst thou live! How diligent and laborious wouldst thou be in a faithful improvement of all thy time, talents, and opportunities, that thou mightst find mercy at such a day, even the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life! Wouldst thou after such a sight think any time too much, or any pains too great, for thy eternal good? Couldst thou give the world and the flesh the choicest place in thy heart, and the chiefest part of thy life, as now thou dost? Shouldst thou dare to be nibbling again at the devil's baits, or to be playing with the eternal fire, or to put off God with a few cold, formal prayers, and that by fits, instead of hearty, fiery, continual supplication? Or to put off Jesus Christ with a compliment, that thou wearest his livery, and professest thyself a Christian, instead of a sincere, resolved dedication of heart and life to his word and law? What sayest thou, man, and why wilt thou not be diligent and as holy now? Thou mayest in the glass of Scripture see all that I have spoken, (for the substance of it at least,) if thou hast but an eye of faith; and, without question, the sight of faith is as sure and true as a sight of sense. What reason canst thou have why thou shouldst not work as industriously to escape hell and obtain heaven as if thou hadst known these things experimentally, when the word of the living and true God speaketh them so expressly? Look 2 Cor. v. 10; Acts xvii. 13; Eccles. xii. 14.

2. Suppose thou wert sure to die this day come month, and take

possession of thine eternal estate, to do that which thou never didst before, nor shalt ever do again, even to throw thy last cast for eternity, wouldst thou not then lay aside all other matters, and make it thy only business to ensure an interest in Christ, and to make sure of a regenerated, sanctified nature? wouldst thou not then think, Well now, there is no daubing, no dallying any longer. I am now going to my long, long, everlasting home: if I now deceive myself with anything instead of the power of godliness, and mistake at death, I shall miscarry for ever; if I be not then right, I shall be wrong for ever. Now or never, now and ever.

Wouldst thou not highly prize every week of that month, every day of those weeks, every hour of those days, yea, and every minute of those hours, and say, Ah, desperate folly to leave a work of such infinite weight, for which my whole life was little little enough, to so short a space; and yet, oh infinite mercy, that I have any seasons of grace left, wherein I may yet work out my salvation with fear and trembling? How wouldst thou labour as for life in this duty, and that ordinance, hanging on those breasts, and tugging hard for some spiritual good! Wouldst thou not, with Jacob, wrestle with God, weep, and make supplication? wouldst thou not, with the Ninevites, cry mightily unto God for mercy? How would thy prayers proceed from the very bottom of thy heart! and with what force would they pierce the very heavens! How wouldst thou, with the Bereans, search the Scriptures, and see upon what terms Christ and heaven may be had! Wouldst thou not strive to break thy heart with the hammer of the law, and to melt it with the sunshine of the gospel, that thou mightst repent? Would thou not encourage thy soul, from the freeness of God's mercy, and fulness of Christ's merit, to believe? Oh, what sad thoughts wouldst thou now have of thy soul and thy sins! what serious thoughts wouldst thou have of God and Christ, of hell and heaven, of death and judgment! Surely other manner of thoughts than now thou hast.

Thus, friend, it will be with thee if thou wert to leave this world within a month, or thou wert worse than a madman. And why shall it not be thus with thee now, when thou art so far from insuring thy life for a month, that thou canst not promise thyself the next hour? Dost thou not believe that thy foundation is in the dust? Job iv. 19; that man at his best estate is altogether vanity? Ps. xxxix. 5; that one dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet, his breasts being full of milk, and his bones moistened with marrow? Job xxi. 23, 24. Thou art not a

tenant at thy own will whilst thou dwellest in thy house of clay. Thou cuttest large thongs of God's time if thou assurest thyself another week.[1] But look, reader, dost thou not see that eternity is at the very threshold of thy house, that there is but a step, a thin paper wall of life, between thee and eternity! Is there not much more reason that thou shouldst be more industrious for thy soul and salvation, when thou art not sure to live a day, than if thou wert sure to live a month?

There is a bird peculiar to Ireland, called the cock of the wood, remarkable for its fine flesh and folly; all the difficulty to kill them is to find them. They fly in woods in flocks; and if one be shot, the rest remove not but to the next tree, and there stand staring at the shooter till the whole covey be destroyed; yet, as foolish as this bird is, it may be the emblem of most wise men in point of mortality; death sweeps away one and one, and one and another, and all the rest remain no whit moved, till at last they are destroyed, and then their folly is, though too late, bewailed.

3. Suppose thou couldst speak with thy carnal, unregenerate neighbours or friends that are now under endless remorse, frying in those unquenchable flames, and shouldst ask them what caused them to miscarry for ever, and how they came to that place of torment; and they should tell thee, O friend, I thought heaven might have been had without so much ado, that there had been no need of that seriousness and laboriousness which a few precise ones practised, and which ministers so much pressed. I thought I might do well enough with a formal, lazy, outside serving of God, because my neighbours did no better. I presumed, that because God was merciful, and Christ meritorious, and I enjoyed the outward privileges of the gospel, and gave God some of the time I could spare from the world and the flesh in a little heartless devotion, that I should be saved; never looking at that inward renovation and outward reformation which, I see now to my sorrow, are required in all to whom the special mercy of God and merit of Christ shall be extended, and now we, and, alas! I, am tormented in these flames.

After such a hearing from hell, wouldst thou not be diligent to prevent thy damnation? Wouldst thou not take heed of those knives of negligence, idleness, and formality, resting in a few good means, which did cut the throat of others' souls? Wouldst thou, after this, jest at heaven and hell, or trifle about regeneration or the new birth? Wouldst thou again mock God, or cozen thyself

[1] Mortalium nemo est qui crastinum sibi audeat polliceri.—*Euripid.*

with a form, a shell, a carcase of religion? Would not the word thou hadst lately heard be always sounding in thine ears, and piercing thy heart, and quickening thee to be sedulous and industrious about thy soul affairs? And why wilt not thou do as much now, when I can assure thee from the mighty possessor of heaven and earth, that this is as true—namely, that many souls are eternally sunk by reason of those quicksands—as if thou hadst heard it from the mouth of hell; nay, it is possible a damned wretch may deceive thee, but it is impossible that the blessed God—who speaketh as much with his own mouth—should deceive thee. Look 1 Thes. v. 3; Mat. vii. 21–23 and v. 20.

4. Suppose thou hadst, with Moses, had a sight of the back parts of the infinite God—about whose service I am persuading thee to be diligent—or, with Isaiah, hadst seen some extraordinary manifestation of his glory; or hadst been with the disciples at the transfiguration of Christ. Or suppose thou hadst been in heaven, and seen the royalty and majesty of God in those glorious angels and saints which continually wait upon him, and in the glorified Saviour who sitteth at his right hand, and representeth him as lively and fully as is possible to the eyes of men. Suppose thou hadst taken strict notice of the number—how many millions!—and order of God's servants there, how high and noble their work is; how holy and pure their worship, and hadst known the infinite power, holiness, wisdom, and justice of God as they do, and God should turn thee again into this world, wouldst thou slubber over thy duties, and play with his ordinances, as now thou dost? Wouldst thou pray to this God as if thou prayedst not? or hear from his Majesty as if thou heardest not? or attend on him carelessly, as if thou didst not attend on him at all? or wouldst thou not rather think, I can never be too serious in the service of such a God; I can never wait on him with humility enough, and with watchfulness enough, with uprightness enough, and with care and diligence enough?

Shouldst thou not be laborious in the service of such a good God? Give me leave to urge this thought a little farther, and to give thee a scripture or two which, through the free grace of God, have sometimes helped me against deadness and dulness in duties. The one is 2 Chron. ii. 5, where Solomon telleth us, The house I am to build must be great—mark the reason—for great is our God above all gods. If God be so great a God, how greatly is he to be reverenced! Canst thou do too much service for him, or give too much glory to him? Can thy love to him be too great, or can thy fear of him be too great, or can thy labour for him be too great,

when this God is so great, that he measureth the ocean in the hollow of his hand, and meteth out the heavens with a span, and comprehendeth the dust of the earth in a measure, and weigheth the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Behold, the nations are as a drop of the bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering. All nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him as less than nothing, and vanity, Isa. xl. 12, 15–17. God is a great God, and therefore greatly to be feared, Ps. lxxxix. 7. God is a great God, and therefore greatly to be praised; for his greatness is unsearchable, Ps. cxlv. 3.

If he be a great God, he may well require a great house to be his material temple; and if he be a great God, may he not justly call for a great part of, yea, all thy heart, to be his spiritual temple? It is likely the son Solomon learned this of his father David, who giveth us this as the reason why he danced before the ark of the covenant of the Lord of the whole earth with all his might, 2 Sam. vi. 14, 21. It was, he saith, before the Lord; as if he had said, Had it been before men only, or in their service, I might have been cold and careless, slothful and sluggish; but it was before the Lord, the infinite, incomprehensible, and holy God, to whom I am unspeakably obliged for his distinguishing mercy in choosing me before thy father's house; and therefore all my might and all my strength was little enough for such a God. I might mind thee further, that thou hast wrought hard in thy slavery to the world and thy flesh, in thy drudgery to the devil and thy lusts, whose reward and wages is nothing but disappointment and vexation, hell and damnation; and shouldst thou not be fervent, fiery—ζέοντες, seething hot, as the word signifieth—in spirit when thou art serving the Lord, Rom. xii. 11. I might also ask thee to whom thou owest thy whole strength and thy whole heart, if not to God? Art thou so much indebted to the world and thy flesh, those enemies of thy salvation, as thou art to the blessed God? and who will at last pay thee best for thy strength and time, God or the world, Christ or the flesh? But I may speak more to this in another place.

Well, reader, have I yet, or rather the Lord by me, persuaded thee to set about this great business, upon which thy eternal felicity dependeth, timely, that is, presently, and throughly, that is, with all thy strength, as the main, chief, and only work thou hast to do? Art thou resolved to do thine utmost endeavour, and through the strength of Christ faithfully to follow the directions which I shall

commend to thee from the Lord, in order to thy recovery out of that bottomless misery into which thou hast plunged thyself? Is there not abundant reason in what thou hast read? Are they the words of a sinful dying man, or of the jealous, ever-living God? Is it I only that call upon thee to mind this spiritual life, or do not the daily and nightly mercies which thou, unworthy wretch, enjoyest? Do not the dreadful judgments which others feel, and thou hast too much cause to fear? Do not thy sweet babes, thy dear children, cry often and aloud in thine ears, 'O that there were a heart in our father, in our mother, to fear the Lord, and keep all his commandments always, that it might go well with them and with their children for ever'? Deut. v. 29. Nay, doth not the almighty God, who observeth all thy wickedness, in whose hands thou art every hour, who can with a word speak thee into that place of woe, where the worth of grace and holiness is better known, and where the weight of sin and ungodliness is more felt? Well, in hope that thou wilt not be such an enemy to the God that made thee, that thou wilt not do that despite to the Spirit that moveth thee, that thou wilt not be such a wilful murderer of thy precious soul as to neglect them, I shall set them down; the Lord set them home to thy heart!

Come along with me, and I will shew thee the bride, the lamb's wife, how she must be trimmed and adorned for the marriage.

CHAPTER XIV.

The first direction for the attaining a spiritual life, illumination.

First, Get thine understanding enlightened in the knowledge of thy sins and misery. The knowledge of thy disease and danger must precede thy recovery and cure. Oh how many thousand souls have miscarried in the dark of ignorance! Did men know, surely they would not daily by their sins crucify the Lord of glory. Did they know their misery, they would not be so merry as they are in ways of iniquity; they rush into sin as the horse rusheth into the battle, not knowing it will be to their death, to their destruction. I have sometimes read a story of a king that was ever pensive, and never seen to smile, and being asked by his brother the cause of it, he put him off till the next day for an answer; and in the meantime caused a deep pit to be made, commanding his servants to fill it half full with fiery coals, and then

causeth an old rotten board to be laid over it, and over the board to hang a two-edged sword by a small slender thread, with the point downwards, and close by the pit to set a table full of all manner of delicacies. His brother coming next day for an answer, was placed at the board, and four men with drawn swords about him, and with all the best music that could be had to play before him. Then the king called to him, saying, Rejoice and be merry, brother; eat, drink, and laugh, for here is pleasant being. But he replied, O my lord and king, how can I be merry, being in such danger on every side? Then said the king, Look how it is now with thee, so it is always with me; for if I look above me, I see the great and dreadful judge, to whom I must give an account of all my thoughts, words, and deeds; if I look under me, I see the endless torments of hell, whereinto I shall be cast if I die in my sins; if I look behind me, I see all the sins which I have committed, and the time which I have spent unprofitably; if I look before me, I see death every day drawing nearer and nearer unto me; if I look on my right hand, I see my conscience accusing me of all the evil I have done, and good I have left undone in this world; and if I look on my left hand, I see the creatures on their Maker's behalf, crying out for vengeance against me a rebel. Now, then, cease hereafter to wonder why I cannot rejoice in the things of this world.

This is the condition of every unsanctified man and woman, and did they but know it, they would see but little cause to spend their days in pastimes and pleasure; but what the eye seeth not, the heart grieves not. Had Haman known he had been so nigh his funeral, he would hardly have boasted so much to his friends; but it is the policy of the God of this world to blind men's eyes, lest they should see and avoid damnation. As when a malefactor is for some capital crime cast at the assize, he is then carried into a dark dungeon, and thence to execution. So the devil, knowing that all the sons and daughters of Adam are cast by the law of God, the law shutting them all up under sin and wrath, endeavoureth to keep them in the dungeon of ignorance till the day of their execution.[1] When Nebuchadnezzar had conquered Zedekiah, 2 Kings xxv. 7, he put out his eyes, bound him in fetters, and then carried him away to Babylon. Thus Satan, as soon as he entereth into the soul, laboureth to put out the eyes of the understanding, and so to lead them hoodwinked to hell. Did men know

[1] Diogenes being demanded what burden the earth did bear most heavy; answered, an ignorant man.

what they had done against God, and how they had undone themselves, they would be restless till they attained a remedy; did the sinner but know the purity, jealousy, power, and justice of that God, whom he daily provoketh; did he but know the love and kindness, the blood and bowels of that Saviour, whom he undervalueth; did he but know the pleasures, and joy, and happiness in heaven, which he neglecteth; did he but know the beauty and amiableness, the delights and comforts of grace and holiness, which he despiseth; did he but know the emptiness and vanity of this deceitful world, which he so heartily embraceth; did he but know where sin is in the premises, sorrow and hell, without faith and sanctification, must be in the conclusion; did men, I say, but know these things, how quickly would they turn from sin unto God, giving a bill of divorce to their most beloved lusts, and entering into a most solemn covenant with the Lord! But having their understandings darkened, they are alienated from the life of God, that is, a life of holiness, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts, Eph. iv. 18. Observe how expressly the Spirit of God speaketh ignorance to be the reason why men are such strangers to the power of religion.

Reader, thou mayest by all this see the necessity of knowledge, if ever thou wouldst be converted and saved. The devil, as I said before, carrieth men hoodwinked to hell; but God will never carry thee blindfold to heaven: 'The end of a saint is the inheritance in light,' Col. i. 12; and the way thither is a way of light: 'The path of the just is as a shining light,' Prov. iv. 18; and surely in respect of knowledge as well as in other respects. Do not please thyself, that though thou art not book-learned, yet thou hast as good a heart as others, as thy foolish, ignorant neighbours will prate, for when thou thus speakest, thou speakest beside thy book; for the book of God telleth us otherwise.

The soul without knowledge is not good, Prov. xix. 2. There may be a clear head without a clean heart, the light of knowledge without the heat of grace; but a gracious heart in a grown person not distracted, was ever accompanied with a competency of knowledge in the head. And indeed knowledge is so near akin to grace, that it is often in the word of God put for it: John xvii. 3, 'It is life eternal to know thee to be the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent,' So 1 Cor. ii. 2; Phil. iii. 8; Isa. liii. 11.

If thou would be sanctified and saved, get knowledge: 'Seek knowledge as silver, and search for it as for hid treasure,' Prov. ii. 3, 4.

This is the first thing to be done; it is first in the minister's commission. 'I send thee,' saith God to Paul, 'to open the eyes of the blind, and to turn men from darkness unto light,' Acts xxvi. 18. And this is first in the Spirit's operation on the soul. It convinceth the man of his sins, John xvi. 10, 11. It presenteth to the understanding a catalogue of its many and bloody provocations. *Imprimis*, Thus guilty in Adam of high treason against heaven's Majesty, and thereby of want of original righteousness, and of a deep deadly pollution in the whole nature: *Item*, So many hundred ungodly actions, so many thousand unholy and idle expressions, so many millions of evil thoughts and suggestions: *Item*, So many omissions and so many commissions: *Item*, So much precious time mis-spent, a moment of which cannot be recalled or purchased with the revenues of the world: *Item*, So many talents of health, strength, food, raiment, esteem, riches, and the like misemployed: *Item*, So many sacraments, sabbaths, seasons of grace misimproved: *Item*, So much uncorrigibleness under afflictions, so much unprofitableness under mercies. Thus the Spirit enlighteneth the sinner's mind to see his sins with their circumstances, and black aggravations; as also what is like to be the fruit and effect of sin, even nothing less than suffering everlasting perdition from the presence of the Lord. It may be the Spirit may cause him, as it were, to see the smoke that ascendeth from the bottomless pit, to smell the scent of that infernal brimstone and fire, to hear the roarings and howling of the damned; nay, possibly, to feel a very hell in his own conscience. The Spirit indeed is a free agent, and worketh in what manner and measure he pleaseth. But this is certain, he convinceth all of their sins and miseries; conviction doth go before conversion. The physician of souls will heal none but such as know both their distemper and their danger, and thereby how infinitely they are obliged to him for their cure. As in the first creation one of the first things God made was light; so, in the forming the new creature, illumination is before sanctification. Every one is able to say in Christ as he in the Gospel, 'This I know, whereas I was blind, now I see,' John ix. 25.

This is absolutely necessary in order to the second direction I have to commend to thee, which is the sincere humiliation of thy soul. There must be a daybreak of light in the understanding, before there can be a heartbreak of sorrow in the affections; till sin and wrath be discerned by knowledge in the mind, they will be no burden to the conscience, nor grief to the spirit. As no good wrapt up in darkness excites desire, so no evil swathed up in

ignorance striketh terror. We may observe this by the holy apostle's expression, 'I was alive without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died,' Rom. vii. 9, *i.e.*, the time was that I was ignorant both of the law's strictness and my own sinfulness, and then I thought myself to be very safe; my conscience was very quiet, and my heart full of hope, or more properly, presumption, about my future eternal happiness; thus I was alive without the law. But when my eyes were enlightened, to see how exceeding broad the commandments of God were, and that once I compared my crooked race with that straight rule, and took notice how far short I came of that obedience which the law required, I was then dead, a lost man: I quickly pulled in my plumes, and took down my sails, with which I was hastening in my conceit to heaven; for I found that I was in very deed in the road to hell. When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. There was then life enough in my lusts to wound me unto death, for I died.

Reader, if thou art convinced so far of the absolute necessity of conversion, as to desire it unfeignedly, let me request thee, for the sake of thy poor soul, to set some considerable time apart; thy body hath had many years, surely thy soul deserveth one day, and that speedily, to be serious in about its endless estate, and to compare thy wicked life with the pure law of God, and observe how exceedingly thou hast swerved from the precepts therein commanded. Consider not only its outward and literal, but likewise its inward and spiritual meaning, and thou mayest presently discern that thy whole conversation for so many years as thou hast lived, hath been a continued aberration and wandering from the Lord and his laws. If thou lookest aright in that glass, it will discover all the spots, all the dirt, that hath been in the face of thy heart and life, James i. 23. 'By the law is the knowledge of sin,' Rom. iii. 20.

Consider also, that thy breach of the law makes thee liable to the curse of the law, which is the infinite eternal wrath of the lawgiver: 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them,' Gal. iii. 10.

The law must be satisfied; since not in its accomplishment, it will in thy punishment.

If God cast the glorious angels out of heaven, and reserved them in chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day for one sin, and that, as some think, in thought, into what a hell may he cast thee, whose iniquities for weight are like the sand of the sea, and

for number like the sparks of a furnace, and the stars in the firmament! Think of it with all possible seriousness; thou hangest over the mouth of hell every moment by a small thread of life, and if that should be cut asunder, the whole world cannot save thee from dropping into it.

CHAPTER XV.

The second help to a spiritual life, humiliation.

II. In the next place, labour to get thy heart deeply and thoroughly affected with thy sins and misery. Humiliation must follow illumination. It is not enough for this knowledge of the transgressions thou hast committed, and the wrath thou hast deserved, to swim in thy head—it may be there as fire in the flint, to no profit—but it must sink down into thy heart, and be beaten out into an application of, and lamentation for, thy guilt and wickedness.

Man is so sinfully subtle, that he can bear the historical knowledge of these things in his understanding; he can hear the name of sin and hell, and be no more troubled than at a painted devil, or a tale of purgatory; but when God brings down sin from being a notion to be an obligation, and entereth an action against the soul within itself, then it will begin to melt and mourn under the sense of its sins and sufferings. Thus, after the Spirit of God hath been a spirit of conviction, it becometh a spirit of bondage: that eye which was before enlightened to see the lewdness of his heart and life, cometh now to affect his heart with grief and sorrow. This we find in those converts, Acts ii. 37, when they had heard of their sin and guilt they began to recant and repent: 'When they heard those things, they were pricked to the heart.' The nails which had pierced Christ's hands now pierce their hearts. It was with them, saith one, as if the sharp points of daggers had been stuck or fastened in their hearts. They wounded themselves with sorrow, that ever they had wounded the Lord Jesus with their sins.

The whole life indeed of a true Christian is, in some respects, a life of repentance. He is often grieving God's Spirit, and therefore he is often grieved in his own spirit. As long as the ship leaketh, the pump must go. Though the Christian doth not paddle or wallow in the mire of sin every day, as graceless ones do, yet he findeth that daily his hands contract dirt and his soul guilt, therefore he must daily wash with faith and repentance.

Some report of Mary Magdalene that she spent thirty years in Galba in weeping for her sins; and Tertullian saith of himself that he was born for repentance. Anselm telleth us, that with grief he considered the whole course of his life. I found, writeth he,[1] the infancy of sin in the sins of my infancy, the youth and growth of sin in the sins of my youth and growth, and the ripeness of all sin in the sins of my ripe and perfect age; and then he breaks out into this pathetical expression, What remaineth for thee, wretched man, but that thou spend thy whole life in bewailing thy whole life?

But especially at the time of a Christian's conversion he is to mind contrition: when the vessel is newly tapped, then it runneth most freely and plentifully. None might approach the king of Persia's court in sackcloth and mourning, Esther iv. 2; but no wandering sinner may draw near to the King of heaven without it. 'Except ye repent, ye shall perish.'[2] God is resolved to break the sinner's heart on earth, or his back in hell. He will have the wound searched and the pains of it felt before it be bound up and cured. The wicked prodigal must come to his Father with compunction in his soul, as well as confession in his mouth.

Look, therefore, O sinner, into the book of thy conscience, and read over the black lines that still are in thy cursed heart, and the bloody leaves of thy wicked life, how long thou hast lived to little purpose, yea, to the killing of thy soul for ever; how far thou hast been from accomplishing the end for which thou wast born, and the errand for which thou wast sent into the world. Keep a petty assize in thy heart; prefer a large bill of indictment against thyself; accuse and condemn thyself, not only verbally, but cordially, if ever thou wouldst have Christ to acquit thee. Thou hast spent many years in sinning, and shouldst thou not spend some hours in sorrowing? Thou didst make the soul of Jesus Christ sorrowful unto death; shall not therefore thy soul be sorrowful when thy sorrow may be unto life? Did the rocks rend when he died for sin, and shall not thy rocky heart that thou hast lived in sin? He bled for thee, and wilt not thou weep for thyself? Thou hast filled God's bag with thy sins,[3] and hast thou no tears for his bottle?[4] Hast thou so long broken the holy commandments of God, and shall not thy heart now at last be broken? The damned feel sin; it lieth heavy on their souls: could thou lay thy ear to the mouth of that bottomless pit, thou mightst perceive by their yellings and howlings that sin is sin in hell, how lightly soever it is regarded

[1] In Lib. Meditat.
[2] Aut pœnitendum, aut pereundum.
[3] Job xiv. 17.
[4] Ps. xlvi. 8.

by men upon earth. The Lord Jesus felt sin: hadst thou been in the garden, and seen his blessed body all over in a gore blood, beheld those drops, yea, clods of blood that trickled down his face, surely thou wouldst have believed that it was some heavy weight indeed which caused such a bloody sweat in a cold winter night.

And art not thou yet weary and heavy-laden? Do I speak to a man or a beast? to a living creature, or to a rock that will never be moved? If thou hast a disease in thy body thou canst grieve and complain, and why not for the diseases of thy soul? Are not they far more deadly, more dangerous? If thou losest a child, oh what crying and roaring, what wringing of hands and watering of cheeks! Nay, if thou losest a place of profit, a house, or a beast, thou canst mourn, and think of it often with sorrow; and doth it not grieve thee that thou hast lost, not thy child or cattle, but thy Christ, thy Saviour, thy soul, thy God, to eternity? If thou missest a good bargain that was offered thee, whereby thou mightst increase thy estate, or if thou buyest or hirest at too dear a rate, how dost thou beshrew and befool thyself for it! Hast thou not ten thousand times more cause to be really and highly displeased with thyself, and to abhor thyself in dust and ashes, that thou shouldst have all the riches, and glory, and pleasures of the eternal kingdom tendered to thee with many entreaties, and yet thou hast refused them for the lying vanities of this world, and for the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season? Thou hast denied heaven's happiness for a bubble, a butterfly; all things for nothing. Did ever any fool buy so dear, and sell so cheap? Like Saul, busy himself in seeking asses when a kingdom sought him; like Shimei, seek his servant, and thereby lose himself? No fool like the sinner, that embraceth a shadow which will certainly flee from him, and neglecteth the substance which endureth to eternity.

Honorius the emperor, hearing that Rome was lost, cried, Alas, alas! very mournfully, fearing it had been his hen so called, which he exceedingly loved; but hearing it was the famous city of Rome that was become a prey to his cruel enemies, he made a tush at it. Thus too too many can grieve sufficiently for the loss of vanities, for toys and trifles, but not at all for the loss of God, and Christ, and enduring felicities.

Well, friend, repent timely and truly of this thy folly; for I must tell thee, shortly it will be too late. If repentance be hid from thy heart now, repentance will be hid from God's eye then, by whose law thou art now a condemned man already. If thy heart be hardened

now in sinning, the heart of God will ere long be hardened in sentencing thee to an eternity of suffering.

It is an infinite mercy that God yet alloweth thee liberty for second thoughts; that notwithstanding thou hast shipwrecked thy soul, yet thou mayest swim out safe upon the plank of repentance. Oh therefore think no pains too great to break thy stony heart; it is worth the while, when free grace hath promised a vast reward to that heaven-born work. Hadst thou once offered up to God the sacrifice of a spirit truly sorrowful, out of love to God, and self-loathing because of sin, I could tell thee as good, as joyful news, as ever thine ears heard. The Father of mercies and God of comforts would be reconciled to thee in the Lord Jesus. Thy prayers for pardon and life would pierce God's ears, and find acceptance, if they proceed from a broken heart, from sincere repentance. A penitent tear is a messenger that never went away without a satisfactory answer. Prayers with such tears are prevalent; yea, in Luther's phrase, omnipotent. Music upon the waters sounds most pleasantly. Thou hast heard the voice of my weeping, saith David, Ps. vi. 8.

Augustus Cæsar having promised a great reward to any that could bring him the head of a famous pirate, did yet, when the pirate heard of it, and brought it himself and laid it at his feet, not only pardon, but reward him for his confidence in his mercy.[1] The God of bowels and compassion would do more for thee upon thy sincere submission.

As Antipater was answered by Alexander, Thou hast written a long letter against my mother; but dost thou not know that one tear of hers will wash out all her faults?[2] When the returning sinner weeps, the tender-hearted Father smiles. As he rejoiceth and laugheth at obstinate sinners' destruction and ruin, Prov. i. 26, so he rejoiceth and smileth at the penitent sinner's conversion.[3] He will do something for a hypocritical humiliation, to assure us that he will do anything upon a sincere humiliation. Seest thou, saith God, how Ahab humbleth himself? This judgment shall not be in his days, but in his son's days, 1 Kings xxi. 29. A pitiful humiliation it was, God knew; he looked sadly, like a fox in a trap, merely to get out; yet God takes notice of it, and deferreth the judgment upon it. If God set such a price upon counterfeit, what will he upon true gold? Fierce Esau relenteth towards submitting Jacob, though he came against him ready and resolved to

[1] Suet. in Vit. [2] Plutarch in Vit. Alexand.

[3] Quod Deus loquitur cum risu, tu legas cum fletu.—*Aug.*

destroy him. Surely, then, the God of compassions—to whose pity and mercy the bowels of all the creatures are but as a drop to the ocean—who calleth those that go from him, will not cast away those that come to him.

Reader, little dost thou think how much he longeth for thy conversion and humiliation. Little dost thou know what kisses and embraces, what robes and rings, what mercies and merits, what a heaven and happiness, what a God, and Christ, and grace, and glory, are all ready for thee, and wait only for thy readiness and preparedness for them, by thy humiliation for, and an aversion from, thy deceitful corruptions.

Alexander's Macedonians having offended him, laid by their arms, put on mourning apparel, came running in troops to his tent, where for almost three days together they remained with loud cries and tears to testify their remorse for offending him;[1] and wilt not thou do as much for offending God?

As thou therefore lovest the life of thy soul, endeavour to get thy heart thoroughly humbled for thy sins; take a view of thy sins in the word of God, in the glass of his law, how in its nature it is contrary to his blessed nature and perfect law, and for its effects it maketh thee obnoxious to all the threatenings of the word, to all the vials of God's wrath, to all the miseries of this life, and to all the torments of hell for ever.

Consider, while thou livest in thy estate of impenitency, thou art a cursed sinner, and if thou diest in it, thou art a damned creature: the hand of God, which is lifted up in the commination and threatening, will fall down in execution. If the wrath of a king be as a messenger of death, oh what then will the wrath of a God be! As that Christian king of Hungary told his brother, that sprang into his presence pale and trembling, because of the executioner and death's-man, that had sounded his trumpet at his chamber door in the dead time of the night to call him away to execution, O brother, thou hast loved me, and never offended me, and is the sight of my executioner so dreadful to thee? How then should I, a grievous sinner, fear to be brought to judgment before Jesus Christ! Consider the day of the Lord's wrath is coming, and who shall abide it? This terrible fire is kindled, this horrible tempest is gathered, and ready to fall on thy head every moment. Do not put these things far off, as many do, who thereby deprive themselves of the happy effects which these thoughts might produce. A cannon afar off, though never so great, doth no execution; men

[1] Plutarch in Vit. Alexand.

will not tremble and fall down for fear of it, when once they apprehend it many miles off. Things afar off, though very big, will seem very small; a star that is bigger than the whole earth, seems no bigger than a torch, being many miles from us. Look therefore on all that misery that is treated of in the first use as thy portion, and as nigh to thee, even at the very door; like a serjeant, it waiteth continually to arrest thee, and hale thee to the prison of hell. There is not a night in which thou liest down to sleep, but this roaring lion of the wrath of God lieth down before thee, and is ready, when thou art asleep, little dreaming of it, to rend thee asunder, and tear thy soul in pieces. In the morning when thou risest it waiteth upon thee, dogging thee all the day long, whatsoever thou dost, and following thee like a bloodhound wheresoever thou goest; thou mayest as soon fly from thyself as from it, till thou art effectually humbled for thy sins, the cause of it. And be not insensible of it, because it is invisible to thee. The influences of the sun are hottest among the minerals in the bowels of the earth, where it is not at all visible, nor they sensible: so the fire of divine fury is hottest where it is not visible, nor the person sensible. Though thou mayest see it as plainly in the Scripture as the sun at noon-day: 'God is angry with the wicked every day,' Ps. vii. 11. There is wrath prepared for the workers of iniquity, and it will assuredly and speedily be inflicted, if thou art not timely and truly humbled and converted.

I would also desire thee to ponder much the free grace of God, which is discovered in the gospel. What bowels of compassion in the Father to give his Son! what infinite affection in the Son to give himself for the reconciliation and salvation of his enemies! It is probable the heat of this unknown love may melt thy frozen spirit; the flint itself is broken with the hard hammer and the soft pillow: this is the most ingenuous sorrow that is never to be sorrowed for, which springeth from the consideration that thou hast sinned against so good, so pure, so perfect a God, in conformity to whom, and communion with whom, all thy happiness consisteth. The law indeed is of excellent use to open the sore, to search the wound, to make the patient feel his need of, and set a price upon, his physician; thus it is a schoolmaster to drive the soul to Christ; but winter fruits are more harsh and sour, when summer fruits are sweet and pleasant. God taketh most delight in those tears and sorrow which are the fruits of hot love to his blessed Majesty. And could I see them once in thee, I durst joy thee of the babe of grace, the new creation. They are at least the kindly bearing

throes of one in travail, very near her hour of delivery, as also often the after-pains. A stroke from guilt, from wrath, broke Judas' heart into despair; a look from love, from Christ, broke Peter's into tears.[1] That sap and moisture which in frost and snow lieth hid and buried in the earth, sheweth itself pleasantly in the fruits of the trees, when it is called forth by the warmth of the sun.

Even Saul himself will lift up his voice and weep, when he seeth a clear testimony of the love and undeserved kindness of David.

Hast thou never beheld a condemned prisoner dissolved into tears, upon the unexpected and unmerited receipt of a pardon, who all the time before was as hard as a flint? The hammer of the law may break the icy heart of man with terrors and horror, and yet it may remain ice still, unchanged; but when the fire of love kindly thaweth its ice, it is changed and dissolved into water—it is no longer ice, but of another nature. Where the sun is most predominant, there are the sweetest spices, the richest mines, and the costliest jewels. Do thou therefore meditate much on the love of God and Christ to thy unworthy soul: think what love is it that still spareth thee, notwithstanding all thy God-daring and soul-damning provocations, and that when others, probably better than thyself, are every day and night sent to that place, where God hath large interest for his long patience. What love is it, not only to forbear thee, but also to do thee good! Thou his enemy art hungry, he feedeth thee; thou art thirsty, he giveth thee drink. 'If a man find his enemy, will he let him go?' 1 Sam. xxiv. 19. But lo, God findeth thee every moment. As all thy sins are within the reach of his eye, so thou thyself art continually within the reach of his arm; he can as easily turn thee into hell, as tell thee of hell: and yet he letteth thee go, and more than that, doeth thee good. Thou spendest every hour upon the stock of mercy. God is at great charge and much cost in continuing meat and drink, and health and strength, and time which thou dost ravel out, and wanton away unprofitably.

What love was that in the Father which sent his own Son to die, that thou mightst live! Well might the beloved disciple say, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life,' John iii. 16. In this the bowels of divine love are naked, as in an anatomy: in other things the love of God is as the beams of the sun scattered, which are warm and comfortable; but in this it is as the beams of the sun united in a burning glass, hot, fiery,

[1] Aspexit Christus, et flevit Petrus.—*Ambr.*

burning love. God so loved the world, so dearly, so entirely, so incomparably, so infinitely: it is a *sic* without a *sicut*, as one observeth—a pattern which can never be paralleled. 'In this God commended his love towards us, in that when we were sinners Christ died for us,' Rom. v. 8. When God sent his Son into the world, he did, as it were, say to him, My dear Son, thou Son of my chiefest love and choicest delight, go to the wicked, unworthy world, commend me to them, and tell them, that in thee I have sent them such a love-token, such an unquestionable testimony of my favour and good-will towards them, that hereafter they shall never have the least colour of reason to suspect my love, or to say, 'Wherein hast thou loved us?' Mal. i. 2.

What love was that in the Son of God, which moved him to become the Son of man, that thou mightst become the son of God! What love was that which made him so willingly undergo the scorns, and flouts, and derisions of wretched men, the rage, and malice, and assaults of ravenous devils, the wrath and fury of a righteous God; such pangs and tortures in his body as no mouth can express, such sorrows and horror in his soul as no mind can conceive; and all that thou mightst escape such misery, and obtain everlasting mercy!

'Greater love than this hath no man, that a man lay down his life for his friend,' John xv. 13. The passion of Christ was the greatest evidence of his affection. The laying down of life did abundantly proclaim his love. His love before was like wine in a cask, hardly seen; but oh how did it sparkle and cast its colour in the glass of his sufferings! This diamond, before hid in the shell, doth shine radiantly in the ring of his death. If his tears did so much speak his love to Lazarus, that the Jews who saw him weeping, cried out, 'Lo, how he loved him!' surely his heart-blood doth far more demonstrate his love to his members. They that beheld him bleeding in the garden, had far more reason to say, Look, lo how he loved his!

What love is that which did all this for such a worm as thou art—such a sinner, such a rebel? what would God lose if thou wert eternally lost? the least tittle of his happiness would not be diminished. This sun is no loser when men shut their eyes, and will not behold its light; what gaineth God, if he gain thee to himself, to his service? thou canst not add the least cubit to the stature of his perfections. The refreshment is to men, not to the spring, when the weary passengers drink of it. He doth not command thee to repent from any need he hath of thee, but from the

pity he hath to thee. He entreateth thee to return, not that he may be blessed and happy, but that he may be bountiful and liberal in bestowing on thee those blessings which accompany salvation. Methinks the apprehension of God's great love and goodness should have such an impression on thee as to make thee little and low in thine own thoughts. Is it not a wonder that God should vouchsafe a gracious look upon such a clod of earth, a piece of clay, as thou art? but what admiration can answer this love and condescension, that God should wait and entreat to lift thee up, who would cast him down?—that an emperor should sue to a traitor; that majesty should thus stoop to misery; that the Lord of life and glory should prepare for thee exceeding rich and precious promises, a crown of life, a purchased possession, and beseech thee to accept of them! Were thy heart never such hard metal, one would think that such a hot fire of burning love should melt it. I have in two or three authors read of five men that met together, and asked each other what means they used to abstain from sin? The first said, the thoughts of the certainty of death, and uncertainty of the time, moved him to live every day as if it were his last day. The second said, he meditated of the day of judgment, and the torments of hell, and they frighted him from meddling with his dangerous enemy, sin. The third considered of the deformity of sin, and beauty of holiness. The fourth, of the abundant happiness provided in heaven for holy ones. The last continually thought of the Lord Jesus Christ and his love, and this made him ashamed to sin against God.

Reader, if thou hast but any ingenuity, the abuse of such love and kindness should work upon thee. Some say, the blood of a goat will soften an adamant; shall not then the blood of this true goat dissolve thy adamantine heart? Beasts themselves have been won by kindness, and wilt thou be worse than a beast, that such philanthropy and kindness of God shall no whit stir thee or humble thee?

There is a twofold necessity of a deep, serious humiliation, for which cause I have been the more large upon it, though indeed I have added very much more than I first intended, in order to the two next directions which I shall prescribe thee.

First, In order to thy hearty acceptation of Jesus Christ. Humiliation is like John Baptist, to prepare the way of Christ before him. Christ will not be a Saviour to them that do not set a high valuation upon him; now an unhumbled sinner is a man conceitedly whole, seeing no need of, and therefore setting

little price upon, the physician of souls. Till men see that they are cast by the law of God, and condemned men, they will never heartily desire and value a psalm of mercy. According to a man's sense of misery, such is his estimation of mercy. When Paul saw himself the chiefest of sinners, then that saying, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, was worthy of all acceptation, 1 Tim. i. 15. This sharp sauce of repentance doth commend Christ exceedingly unto the spiritual palate. The more bitter and irksome sin is, the more sweet and welcome Jesus Christ will be to the soul. When the sinner seeth that he is lost in himself, then, and not till then, will he truly request to be found in Christ; the prodigal did not prize the bread in his father's house till he was ready to perish for hunger. Ministers preach much of the infinite excellencies that are in Christ, of the unspeakable misery of sinners without Christ, of the absolute necessity that men and women stand in of Christ, and yet preach to little purpose. Most prize their shops and their lands, their relations, yea, and their sensual lusts, above the Lord Jesus, notwithstanding all their pretences to the contrary; they see no such need of him, nor such worth in him, as the preachers and Scriptures speak of. What is the reason of it? truly this, they were never sensible of the stings of the fiery serpents; if they had, they would look up to the brazen serpent with an eye of greater respect. They were never pricked to the heart, and therefore cry not out, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?' But when God discovereth his wrath to the soul, and shutteth the soul up under it; when he commandeth conscience in his name to arrest the soul for all its debts which it oweth to divine justice; and when, in pursuance thereof, conscience doth, in the name of the dreadful God, charge on the sinner the guilt of all his sins, and hales him to the judgment-seat of God, where he seeth nothing but frowns and fury, fire and brimstone, and feeleth nothing but tribulation and anguish, indignation and wrath; now the sinner crieth out in bitterness of spirit, O wretched, miserable man, alas, alas! I am undone! What desperate madness possessed my soul, thus to provoke the almighty God by my sins? Into what a sea of misery have I brought myself by mine iniquities! The God whom I see is angry; the wrath which I feel is heavy; the torments which I fear are infinite; the law which sheweth no mercy is violated; the God who will have full satisfaction for the breach of his law is incensed; conscience, which is his jailer, is commissionated to wound and terrify me, and whither shall I go?

There is wrath above me, wrath below me, wrath without me, wrath within me, wrath round about me. A world, mark now, for a surety to discharge me of these debts; a thousand worlds for that balm which can heal this wounded conscience; ten thousand thousand worlds for a Jesus that can deliver from the wrath to come. When sin comes to be sin indeed, then, and not till then, a Saviour will be a Saviour indeed.

Secondly, Humiliation is necessary in order to the soul's hearty resignation of itself to every law and command of Christ. According to a man's humiliation, such will his subjection to Christ be. Humiliation is, in some sense, the foundation of a Christian's obedience, and the strength of the building dependeth upon the strength of the foundation. The reason why the religious buildings of hundreds of professors in our days, though they have been very fair and beautiful to the eye, have miscarried, is this, the want of this foundation, their hearts were never thoroughly humbled. The reason why the stony ground did not bring forth good fruit, was this, the plough had not gone deep enough, it did not take deep root, Mat. xiii. 20, 21.

Men would never dally with God as they do, or halt, as the Israelites, between two opinions—be sometimes for God, and sometimes for the world; holy by fits and girts—if they had ever felt the weight of sin. Christ, when he cometh into the soul as a Saviour, will come also as a sovereign to command and govern the whole man. He is the true Sun, and he will have the whole heaven, the whole heart, to himself; he will allow no writ of partition; his law forbiddeth inmates as well as man's. Now, against this, the natural carnal man riseth and rebelleth exceedingly; he hath ever at this time some lust or other which he valueth as his limbs, some right hand that he desireth may not be cut off, some right eye which he would not have plucked out, some Herodias that must not be meddled with, some Absalom that the sinner entreateth Christ to spare, and deal gently with for his sake.[1] Therefore, before the Lord of hosts can make an absolute conquest, before he can persuade the besieged soul to surrender itself wholly and altogether to his government, he is forced, by the grenadoes and thundering cannons of the law's curse, and God's wrath, to fire and fright it out of all its sinful holds. Then it will come up to those excellent terms of the Lord, which are

[1] Probably, therefore, fleshly lusts may be called earthly members, Col. iii.; not only because they flow from the body of death, but also because they are as dear to men as their bodily members.

most honourable for the Saviour, and most profitable for the soul. Now he seeth most certainly such a sting in sin's tail, that he dares plead no longer for the beauty of its face; now he feeleth it as a dart in his liver, as an arrow sticking in his heart, as a coal of fire in his hand; he is heartily willing, yea, thinks himself much beholden to that Redeemer that will pluck out this dart, this arrow. Oh how readily doth he throw away this coal of fire, fearing to be burnt by it any more! We have two famous instances of this in Scripture. The one is in Paul, Acts ix. 6; when Paul, that was posting in the road to hell, comes to be knocked down, and to feel those tremblings and terrors in his spirit, he crieth out, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' He had probably heard much before of God, but he regarded it not, till now he receiveth a word and a blow—a word from without, and a wound within to set it home; now it is, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' Before it was, What will the high priest, the scribes and pharisees, have me to do? and what will the vain imaginations and high thoughts which exalted themselves against God and Christ have me to do? But now it is, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' Before, his heart was like hard wax, it would take no impression from God; but now it is softened by this fire of inward humiliation, it is ready for any stamp. God may imprint what he pleaseth; 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' The other instance is in the cruel, rough, hard-hearted jailer. After the earthquake and the heartquake which God had caused, he springs trembling in, and fell down before Paul and Silas, crying out, 'Sirs, what shall I do to be saved?' Acts xvi. 29, 30. Observe, now, the man is heart-sick indeed, he is willing to take the most bitter pills; as if he had said, Sirs, do but tell me what I must do for salvation; though the terms be never so hard, the conditions never so unpleasant, the price never so much, the pains never so great, yet I will submit to anything, to all things, for salvation. 'What must I do to be saved?'

When the Israelite first sets out towards Canaan there is a mixed multitude, as when they marched out of Egypt, of carnal affections, which desire and endeavour to bear him company; now, because God knoweth that the land is too good for such evil inhabitants, and, besides, that they will cause many mutinies in the way, he brings therefore the Israelite into the wilderness, to humble him and to cut them off.

Before the soul be thoroughly humbled it dodgeth with Christ, it plays fast and loose, off and on; this it liketh, and that it disliketh; this part of the yoke is uneasy, this burden is too heavy,

and such and such commandments are grievous; fain it would have Christ and his precious promises, but loath it is to forego its old friends, its beloved lusts; but when God is pleased to take the sinner by the throat, and to shake him out of his security, by shewing him sin and wrath in their colours, making him sensible of the one, and terrifying him with a fearful expectation of the other, laying him at the pit's brink, within the smoke of hell, within the the smell of that brimstone, within the scorchings of that eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels, now the sinner seeth that God is in earnest, and therefore dareth not halt or halve it any longer; now he is in a boisterous storm, and casteth all those goods, his darling sins, into the sea, perceiving that he must perish if he do not.

God is necessitated to lance men's wounds, and put them to pain, because otherwise they cannot be cured. When the metal is thus melted, God may cast it into what mould he pleaseth. Oh thrice happy is that heart which hath been deeply and truly humbled! it shall hold out in those tempests wherein many others shall make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience.

CHAPTER XVI.

The third help to a spiritual life, Application of, or affiance on, Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, If thou hast been faithful in following my former advice, to get thy mind enlightened to see, and thy heart thoroughly humbled for thy sin and misery, thy next work is to rest and rely upon the Lord Jesus Christ for pardon, grace, and salvation; to look upon him as one appointed by the Father, given by himself, sanctified by the Spirit, and revealed in the word of truth, the gospel, to be the only and all-sufficient Saviour of lost souls. It is now the proper time for thee to cast thy soul, thy sins, thine eternal estate, upon the infinite meritoriousness of the blessed Redeemer. Experience sheweth, that it is very easy for an unbroken sinner to presume, but surely it is very hard for a humbled sinner that hath had all his vileness and unworthiness displayed before his eye, and the infinite wrath of God, like a mountain of lead, oppressing his conscience, to believe, and therefore I have prepared some choice cordials for such fainting spirits, which I shall give thee anon. But my work now is to beseech thee, broken heart, that thou take

heed of thinking to lick thyself whole. I know the devil and thy heart will be both busy and diligent to get thee to make a Christ of thy contrition, and a Saviour of thy humiliation. Oh how unwilling is man, when he hath shipwrecked his soul, to commit himself naked to the sea of Christ's blood! how earnest is he to have the chains and jewels of his earthly affections along with him, and to swim out upon the rotten boards of his own works!

Reader, now therefore especially, if thy soul be in a flame, be careful out of what well thou drawest the water to quench it.[1] This is one of the chiefest, nay, the chiefest of all, fundamentals in religion, and therefore it behoveth thee to be very tender. Now thou art nigh drowning, near sinking in the ocean of divine fury, thou hadst need to make sure that the bough or stake, or whatever it be by which thou holdest, be strong enough, and able to bear thy weight. It is likely, nay it is certain, if thou art humbled as aforesaid, thou prayest, thou mournest, thou sighest, thou loathest thyself for thy wickedness, thou admirest God for his forbearance, thou longest after help and deliverance. Be sure that thou do not look on these as so much money wherewith thou mayest purchase thy pardon, and buy off thy guilt; for believe it, if thou dost, as white as thy silver is, it will draw black lines; instead of wiping off thy old score, thou wilt thereby run further into debt. Evangelical humiliation is required, not so much to make thee acceptable to Christ, as to make Christ acceptable to thee. It is a good evidence of the beginnings of sanctification, but it is a bad advocate for thy justification. It is as truly dangerous to appear before God in the rags of thy own righteousness as in thy sinful nakedness.

If ever thou receive the blessing of pardon and love from thy heavenly Father, it must be by appearing in the garments of thine elder brother. He maketh his accepted, but it is in Christ the beloved, Eph. i. 6. Nothing but perfect righteousness will pacify God's anger, or satisfy his justice, please those eyes which are purer than to behold the least iniquity. And this righteousness is only in Christ, who was made sin for thee, that thou mightst become the righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. v. 21.

Do not therefore, when thou ceasest to be an atheist, begin to be a papist, in relying upon thy good works; for though God will not save thee without them, yet he will never save thee for them.

Canst thou, saith an eminent minister now with Christ,[2] make

[1] This spiritual life is a life of faith; and indeed upon this the whole almost of thy work dependeth. Fide regeneramur; resipiscentia non solum fidem subsequitur, sed ex eâ nascitur.—*Calv.*

[2] Shepherd's Sincere Convert, p. 107, edit. 5.

thyself a Christ for thyself? Canst thou bear, and come from under an infinite wrath? Canst thou bring in perfect righteousness into the presence of God? This Christ must do, else he could not satisfy and redeem. And if thou canst not do this, and hast no Christ, desire and pray till heaven and earth shake, till thou hast worn thy tongue to the stumps; endeavour as much as thou canst, and others commend thee for a diligent Christian; mourn in some wilderness till doomsday; dig thy nails, weep buckets full of hourly tears, till thou canst weep no more; fast and pray, till thy skin and bones cleave together; promise and purpose, with full resolution to be better; nay, reform thy head, heart, life, and tongue; and some, nay, all sins; live like an angel, shine like a sun, walk up and down the world like a distressed pilgrim going to another country, so that all Christians commend and admire thee; die ten thousand deaths, lie at the fire-back in hell so many millions of years as there be piles of grass upon the earth, or sands upon the sea-shore, or stars in the firmament, or motes in the sun. I tell thee, not one spark of the wrath of God against thy sin shall be, can be quenched by all these duties, nor by any of these sorrows, for these are not the blood of Christ.

It is both unacceptable and unprofitable for thee to approach God, either in himself or in thyself. I dare not meddle with an absolute God, saith Luther.[1] God in himself is a consuming fire, but in his Son a loving Father. Do thou, therefore, now thou knowest thyself and sin, labour to know Jesus Christ, and him crucified, 1 Cor. ii. 2, and count all things dung and dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus thy Lord, Phil. iii. 8. Read, and pray, and weep, and pant, and thirst, that thou mayest be found in him: 'Not having thy own righteousness, which is according to the law; but that which is through the faith of him, the righteousness which is of God by faith,' Phil. iii. 9. Take a view of him in the gospel, where he is crucified before thine eyes, and behold him displayed in both his natures, and all his offices, and therein his suitableness unto, and sufficiency for all the wants and necessities of thy dying soul. Dost thou see a cloud of judgments gathering apace, and ready to pour down on thy head? Run to him for shelter; he is both a shadow from the heat, and a shelter from the storm, Isa. xxv. 4. Is thy conscience wounded with thy sins? Hasten to the wounds of the Saviour: by his stripes thou mayest be healed, Isa. liii. Do the murdering pieces of the law's curses threaten to destroy thee? Fly like the distressed dove to

[1] Nolo Deum absolutum.—*Luth.*

the clefts of the Rock of ages, the bored hands and feet, the pierced side of thy blessed Redeemer; there thy soul may be sure of safety. He is the only ark wherein thou mayest be saved, when the whole world that lieth in wickedness shall be drowned, shall be damned. He is the little Zoar whither thou mayest retire, and thy soul shall live, when fire and brimstone, yea, hell, shall be rained from heaven on ungodly ones.[1] He is the true city of refuge, wherein thou mayest assuredly escape the wrath of God, which, like the avenger of blood, pursueth thee. A hearty, thankful acceptation of Jesus Christ, as he is tendered in the gospel, will at the day of judgment be a plea as acceptable unto God, and profitable unto thee, as perfect subjection to all the commands of the law.

Consider how full his merits are; he is a horn of salvation, Luke i. 69, *i.e.*, strong to save, the strength of the noble beasts lying in their horns. There is no sinner so black but the blood of this Saviour can make white, Rev. vii. 14. There are some diseases which other physicians cannot cure, but he healeth all diseases. All are dangerously, but none desperately sick whom he undertaketh. Thou owest a vast debt to justice, but the Lord Jesus is an able surety: 'He is able to save to the uttermost those that come unto God by him,'[2] Heb. vii. 25.

Oh what is it that thou wantest, which perfect righteousness and infinite meritoriousness cannot procure? Dost thou want remission? God forgiveth sin for Christ's sake, Eph. iv. 32; 'the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin,' 1 John i. 7. He was a great sinner, as Luther observeth, by imputation, that thou mightst be innocent through condonation and pardon.[3] Dost thou want reconciliation with God? He maketh peace through the blood of his cross, Col. i. 20. God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself, 2 Cor. v. 20. He endured his Father's frowns and fury, that thou mightst enjoy his smiles and favour. Dost thou want sanctification? His blood is sanctifying as well as justifying, Heb. ix. 14. He did not only buy off thy score of guilt, but also purchased a new stock of grace for his bankrupt creature to set up with again.

[1] Gehenna e cælo.—*Salv.*

[2] It is a folly to think that an emperor's revenues will not pay a beggar's debts. Christ hath undertook to satisfy, and he hath money enough to pay. Free grace can shew you large accounts, and a long bill cancelled by the blood of Christ.—*Mr Manton on James*, p. *ult.*

[3] Themistocles appeased the anger of king Admetus by holding the king's young son in his arms; so doth the Christian appease God by holding his Son in the arms of faith.

The oil of grace was abundantly poured on the church's head, that it might fall down on the skirts and members. Of his fulness thou mayest receive grace for grace, John i. 16. Dost thou want salvation? He hath the power and gift of eternal life, John x. 28, and xvii. 24. He is the author of eternal salvation, Heb. v. 9. Thou mayest have boldness, through the blood of Jesus, to enter into the Holy of holies, Heb. x. 19, 20. He paid an infinite sum to purchase the Father's house for thine everlasting home. Whatever thy need be, he is able to supply it, for he is a universal treasure which can never be spent, a spring that can never be drawn dry: 'In him dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily,' Col. ii. 9.

Consider also how free his mercy is, as well as his merits full. Thou mayest 'drink of the water of life freely,' Rev. xxii. 17. If thou wilt buy his benefits, thou must leave thy money behind thee; his wine and milk is to be had without money and without price, Isa. lv. 1. Do not hold off, thinking to carry worthiness to Christ, but believe on him, and thou mayest fetch worthiness from Christ. The same free grace which gave Christ for thee without thy prayer, will, at thy desire, give Christ to thee. Do not always lie poring upon thy unworthiness, but if thou art sensible of it, and sorrowful for it, believe it thou art worthy enough to divine acceptation, though not to divine satisfaction. As his omnipotency answereth thy weakness, and his fulness thy wants, so doth his free grace all thy unworthiness. The natural sun doth not enlighten more freely, than this Sun of righteousness doth enliven all that come under the shadow of his wings.

Ponder how universal his offers of grace are. Jesus Christ, with all his merits, are tendered to all. The proposals of divine mercy and love are general and universal. 'Go preach the gospel,' observe, 'to every creature. He that believeth shall be saved.' 'Ho every one that thirsteth,' Isa. lv. 1. 'If any man,' let him be poor or rich, high or low, 'thirst, let him come to me and drink,' John vii. 37.

It is a great encouragement that, in the offers of pardon and life, none are excluded; why, then, shouldst thou exclude thyself. 'Come to me all ye that are weary and heavy-laden,' Mat. xi. 28. Mark, poor sinner, 'all ye.' Art not thou one of that all? Is not thy wickedness thy weight, and thy corruption thy burden? Then thou art called particularly as well as generally. Jesus Christ taketh thee aside from the crowd, and whispereth thee in the ear, O poor sinner, that art weary of the work, and heavy-laden with the weight of sin, be entreated to come to me; I will give thee rest.

Why doth thy heart suggest that he doth not intend thee in that call? Doth he not, by that qualification, as good as name thee? Ah, it is an unworthy, a base jealousy, to mistrust a loving Christ without the least cause.

Once more, meditate how willing he is to heal thy wounded spirit, and be not faithless, but believing. He is willing to accept of thee, if thou art willing to accept him. What mean his affectionate invitations? He seeketh to draw thee with cords of love, cords that are woven and spun out of his heart and bowels: Cant. iv. 8, 'Come away from Lebanon, my sister, my spouse; from the lions' den, from the mountains of leopards.' Christ's love is hot and burning; he thinketh thou tarriest too long from his embraces: 'Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled,' Cant. v. 2. Christ stands begging for entrance: Lost man, do but suffer me to save thee; poor sinner, suffer me to love thee.[1] These are the charms of gospel rhetoric. None singeth so sweetly as the bird of paradise, the turtle that chirpeth upon the church's hedges, that he may cluck sinners to himself. What mean his pathetical expostulations, 'Why will ye die?' Ezek. xxxiii. 11. What reason hast thou thus to run upon thy death and ruin? 'What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me?' Jer. ii. 5; what harm have I ever done them? what evil do they know by me, that they walk so contrary to me? But one place for all: Micah vi. 3, 4, 'O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me. For I brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants.' O my people, remember now what bowels of love are here sounding in every line; what fiery affection is there in such sweet expostulations! Oh admirable condescension!

What meaneth his sorrow for them that refuse him for their Saviour? 'He is grieved because of the hardness of men's hearts,' Mark iii. 5.

He shed tears for them that shed his blood. When he came nigh that city, which was the slaughter-house of the prophets of the Lord, and of the Lord of the prophets, he wept, Luke xix. 41: 'If thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day.' The brokenness of his speech sheweth the brokenness of his spirit. He is pitiful towards their souls that are so cruel to themselves, and weepeth for them that go laughing to hell.

What meaneth his joy at the birthday of the new creature, when he is received with welcome into the sinner's heart? The mother

[1] Mr Manton on Jude, p. 75.

is as much pleased that her full breasts are drawn as the child can be. The day of thy cordial acceptation of him will be the day of the gladness of his heart. At such an hour he rejoiced in spirit, saith the evangelist, Luke x. 21. He wept twice, and he bled, as some affirm, seven times; but we never read of his rejoicing, if I mistake not, but in this place. And surely it was something that did extraordinarily take the heart of Christ, which could, in the time of his humiliation, tune his spirit into a merry note, and cause this man of sorrows to rejoice. Ah, sinner, believe it, he would never so willingly have died such a cursed, painful death, if he had not been willing that sinners should live a spiritual and eternal life.

What mean, I say, his invitations, expostulations, grief upon refusal, joy upon acceptance, his commands, entreaties, promises, threatenings; his wooing thee by the ministers of his word, by the motions of his Spirit, by his daily, nightly, hourly mercies, by his gracious providence, by his unwearied patience, but to assure thee that he is heartily willing to accept thee for his servant, for his son, if thou art heartily willing to accept him for thy Saviour and for thy sovereign? He would never present thee with such costly gifts, if his offer of marriage were not in earnest. Besides, broken-hearted sinner, for it is to thee that all this while I have been speaking how darest thou any longer entertain such a traitor against the King of saints in thy breast, as a thought that the Lord Jesus can be guilty in any of the forementioned particulars of the least insincerity?

Do not, therefore, like the silly hart, go ever up and down moaning and bleeding with the arrow in thy side, thy sins sticking in thy heart, but desire his helping hand to pluck them out, and without question thou shalt have it. He had a special command and commission from his Father to remember and redeem thee: Isa. lxi. 1–3, 'To bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to comfort them that mourn;' and dost thou think it possible for him to be unfaithful in his office or to his Father? No certainly; he keepeth all his Father's commandments, and continueth in his love, John xv. 10, 11.

When he was upon earth, like a physician, he was in his element when among sick and diseased persons, so much did he love to heal and cure. And now he is in heaven, though he be free from passion, yet not from compassion; his heart pitieth thee most tenderly, and his hand will help thee effectually. Cheer up at last, O droop-

ing soul, and look up with an eye of faith to this Lord of life, to this brazen serpent. I may say to thee, as Martha to Mary, 'The Master is come, and he calleth for thee.' Hark how loudly he proclaimeth his general tender of grace: 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come to the waters,'[1] Isa. lv. 1; how lovingly he beseecheth: 'As though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God,' 2 Cor. v. 20. See how cheerfully he looks, out of hope that thou wilt by believing receive him into thy heart: 'His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars. His mouth is most sweet; yea, he is altogether lovely,' Cant. v. 15, 16. How hastily he runs to meet thee more than half-way! love's pace is very swift: 'Behold, he cometh leaping over the mountains, skipping upon the hills!' Cant. ii. 8. Observe how bountifully he provideth for thy entertainment: 'A feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined,' Isa. xxv. 6. 'Behold he standeth at the door and knocketh; if thou hear his voice, and open to him, he will come in and sup with thee, and thou with him,' Rev. iii. 20.

CHAPTER XVII.

The fourth help, Dedication to God.

Fourthly, Dedicate thyself, soul and body, and all thou hast, unto the service and glory of Jesus Christ. If thou hast been unfeigned in the practice of the former directions, I doubt not in the least thy willingness to this. If thy sorrow for sin hath been sincere, like a burnt child thou wilt dread that fire. The sense of former unkindness to Christ is fresh in thy heart; and a very glutton, in pain under a distemper, dares not but forbear such meats as will feed it. If thy marriage to Christ hath been hearty, thou hast given a universal bill of divorce to other lovers, and hast accepted him for thy head and husband, to govern and command thee, as well as to protect and provide for thee, and instate heaven as a jointure upon thee.[2] If thou expectest an immortal life from him, thou must consecrate thy mortal life to him. I hope then thou art contented to take Jesus Christ, for better, for worse; with his shameful cross, as

[1] Vocations and interjections speak very affectionate bowels toward the distressed; God lays his mouth, as it were, to the deaf ear of the unbeliever, and crieth aloud, 'Ho, every one that thirsteth.'

[2] The jewel of faith must be laid up in the cabinet of a good conscience. Though faith justify our persons, yet good works must justify our faith.

well as his crown of glory; with his trials, as well as his triumphs; with his gracious precepts, as well as his gracious promises: nay, I hope thou seest so much equity in his commands, so much beauty in his ways and worship, so much of thy soul's felicity wrapt up in holiness, in order to its perfection and happiness, that thou wouldst much rather choose the easy yoke, the light burden of Christ, than the drudgery of the world, or the bondage of corruption. Truly thus it must be with thee, if ever thou art saved; and thus I thought to have found thee by this time, at least to leave thee.

One excellently compareth holiness and happiness to those two sisters, Leah and Rachel. Salvation or happiness, like Rachel, seems the fairer—even the carnal heart may fall in love with that; but sanctification or holiness, like Leah, is the elder, and beautiful also, though in this life it appears with some disadvantage, her eyes being bleared with tears of repentance, and her face furrowed with the works of mortification. But this is the law of that heavenly country, that the younger sister must not be bestowed before the elder. We cannot enjoy fair Rachel, heaven and happiness, except first we embrace tender-eyed Leah, holiness, mortification, self-denial, and all those severe duties which the church's lawgiver enjoineth.

Friend, sit down and consider what it may cost thee to be a Christian. It must cost thee the absolute denial of thy sinful, carnal self, of the body of death and its earthly members, which are expressly forbidden in the word of God; and thy main work must be every day to crucify and mortify them. Sin must die, though it may be never so dear to thee, or thy soul cannot live. If thou lettest any sin go, since every one is appointed by God to destruction, thy life must go for its life, as the prophet told Ahab, 1 Kings xx. 42. When Christ came in the flesh, sin crucified him; but when Christ comes in the spirit, he will crucify it. As Samson, an eminent type of Christ, pulled down the house upon the heads of the lords of the Philistines, that he might slay them, and so be avenged on them for his two eyes; so Jesus Christ, if he be thy Saviour, is resolved to pull the house in which sin harbours itself down about its ears, and by its slaughter, to be revenged on it for his two eyes, for all the ignominy and shame, agony and pain, which sin put him to. He will teach thee better than to beg the life of those Barabbases, those foul murderers and robbers of God of his glory. And surely ingenuity will learn thee otherwise than to expect such infinite favours from this King, and yet to entertain in thy heart any that are rebels against his Majesty.

Thus it will cost thee the absolute denial of thy sinful self. It must cost thee the conditional denial of thy natural self, and all that is outwardly dear unto thee. Nay, it may cost thee the actual loss of relations, possessions, honour, pleasure, liberty, limbs, life, and all these for Jesus Christ. Thou must resolve, whenever they come in opposition unto, or competition with Christ, his glory, kingdom, and command, to let them go. As when Levi's relations came in competition with the glory of God, he did not know his father, nor would he acknowledge his brethren, Deut. xxxiii. 9. When Moses' glory and pleasures came in competition with a precept of God, he chooseth 'to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of the court,' Heb. xi. 25. When Paul's liberty and life come in competition with the kingdom of Christ, he is ready, not only to be bound, but to die for the name of the Lord Jesus, Acts xx. 24. They all willingly left their own comforts to obey God's call and commands. In conversion, as one well observeth,[1] the use and the property of all we have is altered. All our vessels, all our merchandise must be superscribed with a new title: 'Holiness to the Lord,' Isa. xxiii. 18; Zech. xiv. 20, 21. Then men's chief care will be to honour the Lord with their substance, Prov. iii. 9: to bring their sons, their silver, their gold, to the name of the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, Isa. lx. 9. All we are, or have, we have it on this condition: to use it, to leave it, to lay it out, to lay it down, unto the honour of our Master, from whose bounty we received it.

It was a notable saying of a noble lord of this land,[2] that that person may be deceived, who thinks to save anything by his religion more than his soul; and surely he that saveth his soul, saveth all that is worth saving. He meant that his religion might cost him the loss of all other things. There is certainly, if thou wilt be a Christian indeed, a necessity of laying thy health, strength, time, estate, name, friends, interests in the world, thy calling and comforts whatsoever, at the feet of Christ, to be employed wholly in his service, and improved altogether for his glory, and to be denied or enjoyed, in whole or in part, according to his call and command. This may seem a hard saying to carnal minds, that rather than break, and leave off all show of trading with God, to which their stirred consciences will by no means yield, would willingly compound and give Christ a part, and the world and flesh the other part; but as Christ is worthy of, so he will have, all acceptation. The gods of the heathen are good fellows, and share their honour

[1] Dr Reyn. Sermon on Self-denial. [2] L. Brooks.

among themselves; but this Lord over all, who is God blessed for ever, will not give his glory to others; he will not suffer that superlative esteem, trust, and love of the soul, to be bestowed on any but himself, or to be divided betwixt himself and any other. He will allow no superior, nay, no equal. As Alexander answered Darius, when Darius sent to him about peace, because there were empires enough in the world to satisfy them both, The whole world could endure but one sun, but one Alexander. So the heart of man must have but one general, but one commander-in-chief, and that must be Jesus Christ.

Truly, reader, I hope that these things will not discourage thee from the ways of God. Do but rationally consider them; is it not most just and equal, that since all these things come freely from him, that they should be laid out purely for him? Thou givest thy servant a little meat, and drink, and money, or rather God by thee, and what service dost thou require of him? Thou art instrumental, under God, to the birth and breeding of thy children, and what duty dost thou expect from them? Art not thou ten thousand times more engaged to Jesus Christ, for every bit of bread and breath of air, for every night's sleep and day's supply, for every mercy that thine enjoy, for every moment's abode on this side hell, for every soul-favour, and body-kindness.

In him thou livest, movest, and hast thy being; the light doth not so much depend on the sun, as thy life and all thy comforts depends on Christ. Now, be thy own judge, what service, what obedience, may the Lord Jesus look for at thy hands? If the world or the flesh could do half so much for thee, thou wert more excusable, than now thou art in doing so much for them.

Again, when the question ariseth, whether Christ or the flesh, Christ or the world, should have thy greatest esteem, or love, or trust, or the most of thy time, and strength, and talents. One would think thou shouldst be ashamed to put such a question, or, at least, that the very mention of it would be a sufficient answer to it. Alas! what are all the honours and pleasures, riches and relations, delicates and diadems, of the whole world to Jesus Christ, but as pebbles to pearls, dirt to diamonds, dross to gold, nothing to all things? there surely is no comparison. The whole world of heaven and earth doth not so far excel a feather, as Jesus Christ doth the whole world.

Besides, this request of mine should rather encourage thee, in regard this absolute resignation of thyself to Christ tendeth to the perfection and happiness of thy soul. Thy misery by thy fall is

chiefly in this, that thou hast thereby lost the image of God. Thy want of conformity to him, is the cause why thou hast not communion with him. Beasts do not converse with men, nor trees with beasts, because they do not live the life of each other. Sense must fit trees to converse with beasts, and reason must fit beasts to converse with men, and grace and holiness must fit thee to converse with God. When thou once livest the life of God, as this unreserved soul-resignation or sanctification is called, Eph. iv. 18, thou mayest then bathe thy soul in his love.

Now this is the way to it. The life of Christianity consisteth in a hearty dedication of thyself and all thou hast to Christ. When thou hast done this, thou art a Christian indeed.

The excellency of everything standeth in two things: first, The perfection of beauty in which it was made, and the perfection of use for which it was made. Now the beauty of man consisteth in this, that he was made like unto God, Gen. i. 26; and his end and use is this, that he was made for God; first to serve him, and after to enjoy him, for the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself; therefore to recover the image of God, which consisteth in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, to work to the service and glory of God, to aspire to the possession and fruition of God, must needs be man's greatest good. [1]

By what hath been largely spoken before in this use, thou mayest perceive that there is no going to heaven *per saltum*, by leaping out of a dirty and stinking jakes into the presence of the glorious God. There is a being made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, Col. i. 12, which is by sanctification.[2] As clothes are by lighter colours fitted to receive a deep scarlet dye, so thou must, by this spiritual life of holiness, be fitted for the eternal life of glory. Observe, 2 Cor. v. 5, the apostle tells us, He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing (*i.e.*, heaven) is God. Man is a rugged piece of timber, an unhewn stone; now the stone must be polished, and the timber squared, before it can be fit for the heavenly building wrought for it.

Joseph, when he was sent for to Pharaoh out of prison, changed his raiment, and trimmed himself, and then appeared before the king.

And as there must be regeneration, or the beginning of grace, so there must be a proficiency or growth in grace, to prepare the soul

[1] Dr Reyn. on Hos. xiv., Sermon 7.

[2] Operatione et acceptatione divina idonei constituimur ad participandam sortem sanctorum.—*Davenant in loc.*

for the weight of glory. There is a double right which every child of God hath to heaven.[1] 1. *Jus hæreditarium*, a hereditary right, and that is at regeneration, when he is put into Christ, and made a co-heir with him of his inheritance, having grace begun in him, which shall be perfected in glory, and was given as a principle ordained to such a perfection. 2. *Jus aptitudinarium*, and that is a right of fitness, whereby we are qualified to receive such a mercy; and that as an heir hath a right of inheritance in his non-age, but he hath not a right of fitness till he come to years, and be able to manage his estate when he hath received it. Reader, in both these respects there is a necessity that thou presently make a deed of gift of thyself and thy all unto Jesus Christ; and that thou never more look upon thyself, or anything thou hast, as thine own, but as a servant entrusted with them for thy Master's use and advantage.

Well, reader, I suppose thou dost ere this fully understand the conditions upon which thy soul may be contracted unto Christ. My work is to treat with thee about this marriage. I am commanded by the Lord, as Abraham's steward by his lord, Gen. xxiv., to provide a wife for my Master's Son. I do here, in the presence of the living God, by commission from his Majesty, tender thee the most honourable, profitable, delightful match that was ever offered to mortals. It is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of life and glory, the only-begotten of the Father, the fairest of ten thousands, to be thy head and husband: hereby thou shalt have the King of kings, the Lord of heaven and earth, for thy Father; a queen, the church, for thy mother; the saints, those truly excellent, noble, illustrious ones, higher than the kings of the earth, for thy brethren and sisters; the covenant of grace, in comparison of which all the gold of the Indies is but dirt and dung, for thy treasure; glorious angels for thy servants, the flesh of the Son of God for thy meat, and his precious blood for thy drink; perfect righteousness, which is more beautiful than the unspotted innocency of Adam or angels, for thy raiment; a palace of pleasures, a place of glory, a building of God, a house not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens, for thy habitation. And all this only upon these terms, that thou wilt be a loving, faithful, and obedient wife, which the poorest beggar in the country expects from his wife; that thou wilt heartily give up thyself and all thou hast to his service and glory; and this he desireth also for thy good and benefit, that he may make thee a more excellent creature, and render thee more

[1] Mr Strong, Holiness the Way to Happiness, p. 45.

acceptable to God, and more capable of his dearest love and eternal embraces. As the rain is sent up from the earth in thick and foggy vapours, but the heavens return it in pure and silver showers, so though thou givest an unbelieving, hard, earthly heart unto Christ, he will return it unto thee again, believing, tender, heavenly, such a heart as shall be more pleasing both to God and thyself; and for this he is pleased—though ten thousand suns united into one are but darkness to him, so great is his glory—to condescend to become a suitor to thee, to beseech thee to accept of him, who knoweth thy portion to be misery and beggary, who seeth thy person to be full of ugliness and deformity, who gaineth no addition to his happiness by thine acceptance of his love, nor suffereth the least diminution by thy refusal. Well, what sayest thou to this match? Art thou heartily willing to take Jesus Christ for thy wedded husband, to protect and direct thee, to purify and pardon thee, to sanctify and save thee, to guide thee by his counsel, and afterwards to receive thee to glory? And wilt thou here, in the presence of the Lord, and before thy conscience, which is as ten thousand witnesses, promise and covenant to obey him universally, to love him unfeignedly, to resign up thyself and all thou hast to his disposal unreservedly? What sayest thou? Art thou willing or no? Take heed of dallying in a match that is so unquestionably and infinitely for thy advantage. Believe it, thou shalt not have such offers every day. Do not stick at any of his precepts, for he can require nothing but what is equal, excellent, and honourable. Do not trifle or defer it, if thou lovest thy soul, for this may be the very last time of asking. If thou wilt deal kindly and truly with my Master, tell me; or, if not, tell me, that I may return an answer to him that sent me, Gen. xxiv. 49.

These four directions which I have laid down already are without question the whole of Christianity; and that soul shall be certainly saved by whom they are uprightly practised: yet there are two special means which God hath appointed for the enabling the soul to perform them, which I shall speak briefly to, and for method sake join them altogether.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Two other helps, the word and prayer.

Fifthly, If thou wouldst attain this spiritual life, be much conversant with the word of God; be often reading it, meditating on it, but especially frequent it in public where it is preached; by losing one sermon, for aught thou knowest, thou mayest lose one soul.

Death at first entered into the world by the ear, Gen. iii., and so doth life. Faith comes by hearing, Rom. x. 17. Thou seest in the gospel that faith and repentance are this spiritual life, Mark xvi. 16; Gal. ii. 20; and thou mayest see as clearly that they are both the fruits of the ministry of the word; for faith, that forequoted place, Rom. x. 17, is full; and for repentance, that of Acts ii. 37 speaketh home, 'When they heard these things, they were pricked to the heart:' mark, 'When they heard these things.' The word of God is a hammer with which God is pleased to break the stony heart, and a fire wherewith he melteth the hard metal, Jer. xxiii. 29. In this respect it is that the minister is called the father of some converts, namely, those whom he begetteth through the gospel, 1 Cor. iv. 15.

There is a resurrection of souls at this day, when ministers lift up their voice like a trumpet, Isa. lviii. 1; Acts ii. 37, as well as there shall be a resurrection of bodies at the last day by the trump of the archangel. This is the net which God is pleased to cast into the sea of the world, and wherewith he hath caught many a soul, three thousand at one draught,[1] Acts ii. 41. Spiritual life is the gift of God, as well as eternal: the gift of all grace is of grace; but ordinarily of his own will he begetteth souls by the word of truth, James i. 18. If thou wilt have wisdom's dole, thou must wait at wisdom's gate, for there it is given, Prov. viii. 34.

Grace is the law written in the heart, and usually the ministry of the word is the pen wherewith the Spirit of God writes it.

That is the bed wherein the children of God are begotten, Cant. i. 16; that is the school wherein the disciples are taught of God, and learn the truth as it is in Jesus. The minister's commission doth abundantly evince this: I send thee, saith God to Paul, to

[1] Joh. Isaac, a Jew, was converted by reading the 53d of Isaiah, Junius by the first of John's Gospel, Augustine by the 13th of Romans: 'I will never forget thy precepts, for by them thou hast quickened me,' David, Ps. cxix.

open the eyes of the blind, and to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to the living God.

God indeed is a most free agent, and can work when and how he pleaseth; but it hath pleased him to make the gospel of Christ his own power unto salvation, Rom. i. 16; and it pleaseth him by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe, 1 Cor. i. 21. Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, to the eye of sense may seem better than all the waters of Israel; but Jordan can cleanse and heal when those cannot, because it hath a divine precept and promise annexed to it. Nay, observe how God is pleased to dignify his word, and to honour his own ordinance. When he hath begun the work of conversion himself immediately, he will not perfect it without the ministry of his word. He sendeth Paul to Ananias, Acts ix. 15, to learn what he should do; and biddeth Cornelius by an angel—for an angel must not do that work—to send for Peter, and from him to hear words whereby he and his house should be saved, Acts x. 5, 6. David, who was wiser than the ancients, than his enemies, than his teachers, lieth many months asleep on the bed of security, in a most filtry [1] pickle, till a prophet is sent to call him up and awake him; then, and not till then, he mindeth cleansing, as appeareth plainly by the title and body of the 51st Psalm. So David's heart smote him for numbering the people: but mark the means of it. For, saith the text, when David was up in the morning, the word of the Lord came to Gad, and commanded him to go to David, 2 Sam. xxiv. 10–12.

Yea, the very honour of saving souls, the Most High ascribeth to the ministry of his word, 1 Tim. iv. 16. Timothy is spoken of as saving himself and them that hear him, *i.e.*, instrumentally; thus highly God doth magnify his ordinances, though many men vilify them. Do not thou therefore forsake the assemblies of the saints, as the manner of some is, Heb. x. 25, but lie constantly at the pool, praying and waiting for the troubling of the waters of the sanctuary; the angel of the covenant may move there, and thy diseased soul thereby be healed. Some that have come to church to sleep, as Mr Latimer saith, have been taken napping. As thou wouldst learn that lesson whereby thou mayest be wise to salvation, do not play the truant, but frequent that school where the prophet of the church teacheth. As thou wouldst not quench the Spirit, despise not prophesying, 1 Thes. v. 19, 20. They that came to catch the preacher, have been caught by the sermon, as Augustine by Ambrose.[2] And they that come to see fashions, as Moses came

[1] Qu. 'filthy'?—ED.

[2] Aug. Confes., lib. v. cap. 1.

to the bush, may be called as he was. The soldiers or officers that went to apprehend Christ were probably apprehended by Christ, John vii. 46. When Henry Zatphen was preacher at Breme, the papists sent their chaplains to hear, that they might entrap him, but God converted by his ministry many of them.—*Slead. Comment.*

If thou wouldst have thy heart thoroughly humbled, make use of the word; you may read of a bad, hard, cursed heart indeed humbled by this, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 19. Manasseh in his affliction humbled himself greatly; for God sent unto him prophets and seers, that spake unto him in the name of the Lord; so 2 Sam. xxiv. 10–12.

Wouldst thou rest upon Jesus Christ for salvation? Mind the word: 'Every one that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto me,' John vi. 45.

Wouldst thou have thine inward man renewed and changed? This may be done by the blessing of God accompanying his word; therefore it is called the ingrafted word, James i. 21. To teach us that, as the scion of a good apple grafted into a crab tree stock, hath virtue to change the nature of it; so hath the word preached,—for of that he speaketh, as is manifest, ver. 19–23,—virtue to change the heart of man.

Reader, let me persuade thee to have a reverent esteem of, and to be very familiar with, the word of God, reading it constantly, and hearing it frequently, as the Lord shall give thee opportunities; but take heed how thou hearest, Luke viii. 18, how thou readest. Attend on the word, having first laid aside all superfluity of naughtiness; weeds must be rooted up before the ground of man's heart is fit to receive the seed of the word. 1. With meekness of spirit, James i. 21. The humble sinner is fittest to be Christ's scholar. 'The meek he will teach his way; the meek he will guide in judgment,' Ps. xxv. 8, 9. When the heart is tender, it is most teachable; it is like white paper for any inscription, like soft wax for any impression. A proud person is too good, in his own conceit, to be taught; he quarrelleth and rageth, either at the person that preacheth, or at the plainness of the sermon, but to his own ruin. He rejecteth the counsel of God, but it is against himself, to his own hurt, Luke vii. 30. The weak corn, which yields to the wind, receiveth no damage by it, but the proud, sturdy oak, which resisteth it, is often broken in pieces.

2. Attend on the word, with a resolution to obey whatever the Lord shall in his word command thee. Oh it is excellent to sit

at God's feet, hearing his voice purposely that thou mightst do his will; like a servant, to go to thy master and know his mind, that thou mayest fulfil it; when thou canst say, I am here present before the Lord, to hear and do the things that are commanded me of God, Acts x. 33; like the Romans, to deliver up thyself wholly to that form of doctrine, εἰς τύπον διδαχῆς, which God hath delivered down unto thee, as metal for any stamp and mould, Rom. vi. 17.

3. With self-application. Do not think this concerneth such a man, and now the minister hitteth such a one; but consider, now God speaketh to my soul, and this truth doth nearly concern me.[1] If the word be not mixed with faith, it will not be profitable to them that hear it, Heb. iv. 2. Whilst truths rest in generals, little good will be done, but when they come to be particularly applied, and to sink down into the heart, then they work effectually for the soul's salvation. Truths generally received are like the charging a piece, but the particular application of them dischargeth it, and doth the execution upon sin.

4. With supplication before and after reading or hearing. Begin with God: 'Lord, open mine eyes, that I may see the wonderful things of thy law,' Ps. cxix. 18. Begin duty with duty: 'The preparation of the heart in man is from the Lord,' Prov. xvi. 1. And after thou hast heard or read, pray, as the disciples after they had heard, Lord, open to us this parable, Mat. xv. 15. This scripture, 'Write thy law in my heart, and thy truth in mine inward parts; teach me thy way, lead me in thy righteousness. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart,' Ps. cxix. 33, 34.

Urge thy soul with the necessity of this duty, that thou must be converted or condemned; and it is the law of the Lord that is perfect, converting the soul, Ps. xix. 7. That thou must know thy misery, or feel it eternally; and it is the precept of the Lord that is pure, enlightening the mind, Ps. xix. 8. That thou must repent or be ruined; and it is by hearing that men come to be pricked at the heart, Acts ii. 37. That thou must believe or perish; and how shalt thou believe on him of whom thou hast not heard? Rom. x. As ships will ride a long time in a roadstead, when they might be in the haven, for this end, that they may be in the wind's way to take the first opportunity that shall be offered

[1] Plato, as he walked in the streets, if he saw any dissolute or disordered, would reflect on himself with *Num ego talis*, Am I such a one as this man is?—*Diogen. Laert. in Vita.*

for their intended voyage; so do thou ride in the road of God's ordinances, waiting for the gales of the Spirit. Thou knowest not how soon that wind may blow on the waters of the sanctuary, and drive the vessel of thy soul swiftly, and land it safely at the haven of happiness, of heaven.

Sixthly, If thou wouldst attain this spiritual life, be frequent and fervent at the throne of grace, that the God of all grace would infuse grace into thee, and breathe into thy soul the breath of this spiritual life. As Abraham pleaded for Ishmael, Gen. xvii. 18, 'Oh that Ishmael might live before thee!' so do thou for thy soul, Oh that my soul might live before thee! And as the ruler for his son, Lord, come down quickly ere my soul die, yea, ere it die eternally.

Go to God with a sense of thy own unworthiness and iniquities, that though thou comest to his Majesty for the greatest favours, yet thou art less than the least of all his mercies, acknowledging that thou hast sinned heinously against heaven, and before him, and art unworthy to be called his son. Confess thy original, actual, heart, life sins, with their bloody aggravations, and entreat him to pardon and purify thee. Oh with what humility, reverence, and self-abhorrency should such a guilty prisoner approach the judge of the whole earth! Arraign, accuse, and condemn thyself and thy sins, if ever thou wouldst have God to acquit thee.

Pray also with a sense of thy own impotency and weakness. That though there be a necessity of humiliation, if ever thou wouldst escape damnation, yet thou canst as soon fetch water out of a rock, as tears from thine eyes, or sorrow from thine heart, for thy sins; till the wind of the Spirit bloweth, those waters will never flow. It is God that must give to thee, a poor Gentile, repentance unto life, Acts xi. 18. That thou must believe, or thou canst not be saved; yet thou canst as easily cause iron to swim, as thy soul to believe in the Son of God.[1] Faith is the gift of God, Phil. i. 29; Zeph. iii. It is as hard a work to believe the gospel, as to keep the law perfectly. Nothing less than omnipotency can enable the soul to either. As thy first birth and generation, so is thy second birth and regeneration, from the Lord. Men and means may be instrumental and subservient, but their efficacy and success dependeth on God.

When thou hast, through the strength of Christ, wrought thy heart to some sense of thy weakness and unworthiness, then look into the Scriptures, and fetch arguments from God's own mouth,

[1] Non minus difficile est nobis velle credere quam cadaveri volare.—*Beza Confes.*, p. 22.

weapons from his own armoury, whereby thou mayest prevail with him, and overcome him. Beseech him to consult his glorious name and gracious nature; mind him that he is the Lord, the Lord God, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, Exod. xxxiv. 6. Tell him that he delighteth not in the death of sinners; that he taketh more pleasure in unbloody conquests, in the cheerful services, than in the painful sufferings of his creatures; that he had much rather have trees for fruit than for the fire. Say, 'Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness; and after the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out mine offences,' Ps. li. 1. O thou that art rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith thou lovest souls, quicken me in Christ, that by grace I may be sanctified and saved. Since thou delightest in mercy, be pleased, Lord, to delight both thyself and thy servant, by extending thine hand of mercy to pluck me out of this bottomless depth of misery. Entreat God to consult his own honour, as well as his gracious nature. Mind him, that if he condescend to convert and save thee, he shall have the glory of his patience, in waiting thus long to be gracious; the glory of his providence, in causing all things to work together for thy good; the glory of mercy, in pitying and pardoning such a grievous sinner; the glory of his justice, in that noble satisfaction it shall have from the death of his Son; the glory of his power, in bringing such a rebellious heart into subjection unto Jesus Christ. Entreat his Majesty to consider, that he may pardon and cleanse thee, through Christ, without the least diminution to his glory; nay, that far more revenues will come to his crown from thy salvation, than from thy damnation; that the forced confessions of them that perish, as of malefactors upon the rack, do not sound forth his praises so much, nor so well, as the joyful hearty acclamations of his saved ones. Say, Lord, if thou suffer me to continue in my filth and pollution, and never wash me by the blood and Spirit of thy Son, and suffer me to perish eternally, thou art righteous; but, Lord, if I perish I shall not praise thee; thy glory will rather be forced out of me with blows, as fire out of a flint. Thou delightest to see poor creatures volunteers in thy service; the damned do not celebrate thy praise, they that go into the infernal pit give thee no thanks, Ps. xxx. 9. The living, the living, they shall praise thee—they that live spiritually, and they that live with thee eternally, Ps. lxxxviii. 10, 11; Isa. xxxviii. 19. Oh what hosannas and hallelujahs! What honour, and glory, and blessing, and praise do they give to the Lord, and to the Lamb that sitteth

upon the throne for ever! Oh let my soul live, and it shall praise thee. Thine is the kingdom and power, do thou work within me by thy grace, and thine shall be the glory.

Desire God to consider his own promise as well as his praise. Urge his own word, that they that ask shall receive, that seek shall find, that knock shall have heaven opened; that if men know how to give good gifts to them that ask, how much more will the Father in heaven give his holy Spirit to them that ask; that he will circumcise the hearts of men and women to love him, Deut. xxx. 6; that he will put his fear into their hearts, and they shall never depart away from him, Jer. xxxii. 40; that he will write his law in their hearts, Jer. xxxi. 33. Go in to him when thou art full of heaviness, as Bathsheba did to David, 1 Kings i. 17, 18, and say, Did not my Lord promise thus and thus, and is it thy mind that thy word should go unfulfilled? Lord, are not these thy own words, thine own handwriting? Whose staff and bracelet is this? If thou hadst not promised, I should not have found in my heart to pray; and if thou shouldst not perform, where would be the glory of thy truth? 'Thy mercy, O Lord, is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds,' Ps. lvii. 10. 'My soul cleaveth unto the dust, quicken thou me according to thy word,' Ps. cxix. 25. 'Remember thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope,' Ps. cxix. 49.

Beseech him to consider thy mercy.[1] Like a beggar, uncover thy nakedness, shew thy sores and wounds to move him to pity. Tell him, that in regard of thy spiritual condition thou art at present wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked, Rev. iii. 17; without God, without Christ, without hope, an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and a stranger from the covenants of promise; and that thine eternal state is like to be the worm that never dieth, the fire that never goeth out, amongst devils and damned ones, in blackness of darkness for ever. Say, Lord, open thine eyes, and see thy poor creature weltering, wallowing, polluted in his own soul-blood; and now I am in my blood, open thy mouth and say unto me, Live; yea, now I am in my blood, say unto me, Live, Ezek. xvi. 6. Since no eye pitieth me to do any good unto me, open thine heart, and let thy bowels yearn towards me. Let this time be thy time of love; spread thy skirt over me, and cover all my nakedness. Enter into a covenant with me, and enable me to become thine for ever. Since thou beholdest all the wants and necessities of my poor soul, open thine hand and supply all my spiritual need.

[1] Qu. 'misery'?—ED.

There is bread enough, and to spare, in the Father's house, oh let not my dying soul perish for hunger. Open thine ears and hear the prayers and supplications which thy servant poureth out before thee night and day. Thou hast the key of David, and openest, and no man shutteth; open the iron gate of my heart, which will never open of its own accord, that the King of glory may enter in. Thou didst open the rock, and cause it to send forth water. Bow the heavens and come down; break open this rocky heart and come in, and take an effectual, universal, eternal possession of my soul. Consider thy bottomless mercy, Christ's infinite merits, my unspeakable misery, and let thine heart be opened in pity, and thine hand in bounty, that my lips may be opened, and my mouth may everlastingly shew forth thy praise.

Only in thy prayers be instant, constant, and look up to Jesus Christ. Beg hard, though humbly, when thou art begging for heaven.

Hast thou never heard a malefactor, condemned to be hanged, begging for a reprieve or pardon? With what tears and prayers, what bended knees, watered cheeks, strained joints, he entreateth for his mortal life! Thou hast much more cause to be earnest when thou art begging for spiritual life. Think of it; thy soul, thy eternal condition, are engaged and at stake in thy prayer. Oh how should all the parts and faculties of thy body and soul work and unite in prayers that are of such concernment! What fervency shouldst thou use, considering that, if thou art denied, thou art undone! If thy prayers be lost, thy God is lost, thy soul is lost, thy happiness is lost for ever.

Pray constantly; resolve to give God no rest day nor night, till he give thee rest in his Son. Besides set times every day, (for which thou canst not offer so little as two hours a day, it being soul-work, God-work, eternity-work, and in which I would desire thee to be as serious and solemn as is possible;) thou mayest often in the shop, or in the field, in thy journeying, on thy bed, thou mayest turn up thy heart to heaven, in some ejaculations (it is thy great privilege, wherever thou art, thou mayest find God out) such as these, 'O when wilt thou come unto me?' Ps. ci. 2. Hear me speedily, O my God, make no tarrying, Ps. xl. 17. Shall I never be made clean? good Lord, when shall it once be? 'Save me, Master, or I perish.'

But be sure, in all thy addresses to God, thou look up to Jesus Christ as thine advocate with the Father, as the only master of requests, to present and perfume all thy prayers, and thereby make

them prevalent. Through him we have access with confidence unto the Father, Eph. ii. 18. It is possible thou mayest have seen a child going to be scourged for its faults by a stern mother, the tender father sitting by; and how the child, seeing the rod taken down and the mother in earnest, casteth a pitiful, lamentable look upon its father, both longing and expecting to be saved by his mediation. Go thou and do likewise; and know, for thy encouragement, that if David heard Joab, whom he loved but little, for rebellious Absalom, and if Herod heard Blastus, a servant, for those of Tyre and Sidon who had offended him, then, without doubt, God will hear the Son of his infinite love for thee. And if thou art but sensible of thy soul-sickness, thou mayest be confident that thy spiritual physician, who is authorised by his Father to practise, and delighteth exceedingly in the employment, will come and heal thee. Thy sickness shall not be unto death, but for the glory of God, and thine eternal good.

CHAPTER XIX.

Motives to mind this spiritual life: It is the most honourable, most comfortable, most profitable life.

I shall, in the next place, only annex three properties of this spiritual life, as motives to encourage thee to a laborious endeavouring after it, and then leave both thee and this exhortation to the blessing of God.

First, This spiritual life is the most honourable life. No life hath so much excellency in it as the life of godliness. If I had my wish, saith Luther, I would choose the homely work of a rustical Christian before all the victories of Alexander the Great and Julius Cæsar.[1] The excellency and dignity of every life dependeth upon the form which is its principle, and its specificating difference. Therefore the life of a man is more noble than the life of a beast, because it hath a more noble form, a rational soul, which distinguisheth it specifically from, and enableth it to act more nobly and highly than a beast. And truly, therefore, the life of a Christian is more honourable and excellent than the life of any other man, because he hath a more noble form—which is the principle of it, and differenceth it specifically from the life of graceless men—Jesus Christ,

[1] Si daretur mihi optio, eligerem Christiani rustici agreste opus, præ omnibus victoriis Alexandri Magni et Julii Cæsaris.—*Luth. in Gen.* xxxix.

the Lord of life and glory, dwelling in his heart by his Spirit, as the principle of his spiritual life. If there be an excellency in that body which is united to a soul, what excellency is there in that soul which is united to a Saviour! It is called the life of God, Eph. iv. 18. Surely no life can be more honourable than the life of God; yet in their measure the sanctified ones live the very same life that the glorious God, the fountain of all true honour, liveth. David, though a king, thought himself honoured by being God's subject; and therefore as others, before their works, mention those titles which belong to them, and speak their honour, David styleth himself, before the six and thirtieth Psalm, a servant of God, as his most honourable title—'A Psalm of David, a servant of the Lord.' If it be such an honour to serve an earl, a king, what is it to serve the King of kings and Lord of lords![1]

Godliness is called a walking with God, Gen. v. 24; a conversing or having fellowship with the Father, and Jesus Christ his Son, 1 John i. 3. For God to walk and converse with us is his greatest humiliation; but for us to walk or converse with God is our highest exaltation.

The righteous, saith the wise man—who had judgment to set a due price upon persons—is more excellent than his neighbour, Prov. xii. 26. Let him live by never so rich or great men, yet if they want grace, they are not comparable to him.

The godly man hath the most honourable birth—he is born of God, John i. 13; the most honourable breeding—he is brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; the most honourable tutor and teacher, the good Spirit of God, John xiv. 16; the most honourable attendants, the glorious angels; the most honourable employment—his main work is to wait upon and worship the most high God.[2]

The most honourable relations: a king for his father, 2 Cor. vi. 18; a queen for his mother, Gal. iv. 26; the excellent of the earth, Ps. xvi. 3; lords in all lands, Ps. xlv. 16; higher than the kings of the earth, Ps. lxxxix. 27; those worthies, of whom the world is not worthy, for his brethren and sisters.

Numa, second king in Rome, though a heathen, could say that he held it a higher honour to serve God than to rule over men.

The Jews say that those seventy souls which went down into

[1] Constantine and Valentinian, two emperors, subscribed themselves *Vassallos Christi.—Socr.*

[2] Sumus Domini non tantum in genitivo singulari; sed etiam in nominativo plurali.—*Luth.*

Egypt were more worth than all the seventy nations of the world beside. If the glorious angels in heaven are more honourable than the devils, sure I am it is holiness that maketh the difference.

The most gaudy and goodly fruits of morality, springing from the soil of nature, manured and improved to the utmost; the heavens bespangled with those glittering stars, and adorned with that illustrious sun, are nothing glorious in comparison of the heart of a poor Christian that is embroidered with grace. It is godliness alone that addeth worth and value to all our civil and natural things; as the diamond to the ring. Nothing doth really debase and degrade a man but sin; and nothing doth truly advance or ennoble the soul but holiness. Job scraping himself on the dunghill, and Jeremiah sinking in the mire, were more honourable and glorious than Ahab and Ahaz on their thrones with their crowns. If the respect we have from others makes us honourable, then they that are most precious in God's sight are most honourable, Isa. xliii. 4. If it be some internal excellency that makes men honourable, then they that have the image of God must be most honourable.

It is worthy our observation that sin is so ignoble and base, that those wicked ones who love it most, are ashamed to own it openly; but because of the excellency of holiness, will set that forth for their colours, their banners, though indeed they fight Satan's battles. That forlorn hope for hell, 2 Tim. iii. 5, of covenant-breakers, blasphemers, men without natural affection, yet they will have a form of godliness; though they do sin's drudgery, yet they are ashamed of their base master, and therefore wear the saints' livery, having a form of godliness. Nay, the devil himself will appear in Samuel's mantle, and transform himself into an angel of light.

But holiness is so excellent that God is pleased to esteem it as his own beauty and glory. How often is he called the Holy One of Israel! The angels ascribe holiness to him by way of eminency: 'Holy, holy, holy,' Isa. vi. 3. We read not in Scripture of any of God's other attributes thrice repeated, to shew that the dignity of God consisteth in this. And so do the saints in heaven praise him for it as his excellency, Rev. vi. 10, and the saints on earth, Exod. xv. 11. Holiness is the character of Jesus Christ; the image of the infinitely glorious God; nay, it is called the divine nature. Surely, then, they that have most of it are most honourable; and they which want it, how full soever they are of all other excellencies, are base and contemptible.

Secondly, As this spiritual life is most honourable, so it is most

comfortable. There is no life so pleasant and delightful as the life of a saint. The merry grigs and jolly gallants of the world, whose sinful mirth is worse than madness, will needs tell us, that godliness makes men moppish and melancholy; that when once we salute religion, we take our leave of all delight and consolation: whereas, indeed, there never was true peace born, but it had purity for its parent; all other is spurious and illegitimate. But the world, like the primitive persecutors, put Christians into the skins of bears and bulls, and then bait them, as if they were really such. And the hand of the devil is in all this, who, like the Indians, maketh great fires to fright mariners from landing at such coasts as would be most for their comfort and contentment. Believe, reader, the true and faithful witness, 'His ways are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are peace,' Prov. iii. 17. It is not sanctity, but their want of it, or mistake about it, which maketh them sorrowful.

It is confessed saints may be sad; they do not cease to be men, when they begin to be Christians. It was in thy company, it may be, O sinner. No wonder. Fish cannot sport themselves when they are out of their element. Birds do not sing on the ground, but when they are mounting on high towards heaven. And probably their hearts were heavy out of compassion to thee, whom they observed to be hastening to hell, and dancing merrily over the very pit of destruction and easeless misery. Thou seest their sorrows sometimes, thine eyes may behold their tears; but thou dost not see their joys, thy heart cannot conceive them.

St Augustine relateth concerning a heathen that shewed the father his idol gods, saying, Here is my god, where is thine? and then pointing up to the sun, he said, Here is my god, but where is thine? I shewed him not my God, saith Augustine, not because I had none to shew, but because he had no eyes to see him.[1] Thus the joys of a saint are invisible to the wicked, because they are inward spiritual joys, though they are joys unspeakable and glorious.

They have such joy as thou art not to intermeddle with, Prov. xiv. 10; they have meat to eat which thou knowest not of. Their life is a hidden life, Col. iii. 3, and their comforts are hidden comforts. Their secret meals fatten their souls, and their bread eaten in secret, how pleasant is it!

The kingdom of God, which is this spiritual life, consisteth not in meats and drink, but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the

[1] Augustine Confess.

Holy Ghost, Rom. xiv. 17; and besides, it cometh not with observation, Luke xvii. 20; the world taketh no notice of it. It doth not consist in the laughter of the face, in the smiles of the brow, but in the tranquillity of the mind, solid contentment in the breast.

Christ takes his spouse apart from the crowd of the world, and then gives her the sweetest kisses, the dearest embraces, yea, her very fill of love. Many a loving visit hath the saint from the Saviour; when Christ came in at the back door, the neighbours neither saw when he came, nor when he went away. A true Christian hath the most heart-cheering wine, though he hangs out no bush, maketh no show of it in the world; the wealthy merchant, that is worth thousands, doth not cry his commodities up and down the city.

The parlour, wherein the Spirit of Christ entertains the Christian, is an inner room, not next the street, for every one that goeth by to smell the feast: 'The stranger doth not meddle with his joy,' Prov. xiv. 10. Christ and the soul may sit at supper within, and thou not see one dish go in, nor hear the music that sounds so sweetly in the Christian's ears.[1] Perhaps thou thinkest he wants peace, because he doth not hang out a sign in his countenance of that peace and joy within. Alas, poor wretch! may not the saint have a peaceful conscience, with a solemn, yea, sad countenance, as well as thou and thy companions have a sorrowful heart, when there is nothing but fair weather in your faces?

Whether they have the greatest comfort or no, do thou judge. Sure I am, there are none in this world that have so much ground to be comfortable as they have. They have the most delightful company; they walk with God, they sup with Christ; their fellowship is with the Father, and Jesus Christ his Son, which is the only good fellowship, 1 John i. 3. They have the most delightful food; they eat of the bread that came down from heaven, and drink of that love which is better than wine. They are abundantly satisfied with the fatness of God's house, and made to drink of the rivers of his own pleasures, Ps. xxxvi. 8, and are bidden welcome with, Eat, O friends, drink abundantly, O beloved! These are exceedings indeed; but, if it be not their own fault, they have them often, besides their every hour's fare of a good conscience, which is a continual feast. They have the most delightful music, they hear the joyful sound of the gospel of peace, the glad tidings of pardon, adoption, salvation, and so may rejoice in hope of glory; many a

[1] Mr Gurnal, Arm., 2d part, p. 343.

time surely their hearts are warmed, and their ears ravished, at the hearing of the affection which Christ beareth to them, and the benefits he hath bought for them. They have the most delightful lodging; they lie all night between Christ's arms, in the chamber of the great King. They have the richest mercies, the special love of the Father, the precious blood of the Son, and the divine graces of the Spirit, when others have only the blessings of the footstool, of the left hand, such giftless gifts, as one calleth them, as may consist with an eternal separation from God. They have the mercies of the throne, of the right hand, the blessings of his own children, and such as do accompany salvation. No wonder that they sit under Christ's shadow with great delight, and his fruit is sweet unto their taste, Cant. ii. 3.

The child of God, by virtue of a good conscience, in the midst of the waves of affliction, is as secure as that child which in a ship-wreck was upon a plank with his mother, till she awaked him then securely sleeping, and then, with his pretty countenance sweetly smiling, and by and by sportingly asking a stroke to beat the naughty waves. At last, when they continued boisterous for all that, sharply chiding them as if they had been his playfellows.[1] Oh the innocency, oh the comfort, of peace of conscience!

It is likely, indeed, that when they wander from Christ, they may come home by Weeping-cross, as outlying deer are full of fear, and therefore, it is observed, seldom fat, but they run the ways of God's commandments with enlarged hearts. And whatever be the cause of their sorrow, whether their own sins, or thine, or others', or the afflictions of the church, whatever it be, their mourning is better than thy carnal mirth.

And this I dare undertake for them, that in their most disconsolate condition, they shall not change with the most prosperous prince in the world that is out of Christ. Alas! the comfort of a sinner, as it is but short, like the crackling of thorns under a pot, so it is but shallow, skin-deep at most, like a sudden storm of rain which wetteth the surface of the earth, but never sinketh to the root.[2] Their joy may smooth the brow, but cannot warm the breast; their looks may be sometimes lively, but their hearts are always heavy: 'For there is no peace to the wicked, saith my God,' Isa. lvii. 21. Their mirth is like some juicy plums, which have stones with a bitter kernel. It is not the great cage that maketh the bird sing, nor the great estate that bringeth real comfort. The stateliest

[1] Dr Stoughton.

[2] Cæteræ hilaritates non implent pectus, sed frontem remittunt.—*Sen.*, de sapi. 23.

and best accommodated houses of unsanctified men, are but like the nests of wasps, where there may be curious combs, but no honey, many outward mercies, but no true inward mirth, no sweetness. When the voice of joy and salvation is in the tabernacle of the righteous, Ps. cxviii. 15, they only have the strong consolations, Heb. vi. 18, the joy unspeakable and glorious, 1 Peter i. 8, the peace of God which passeth all understanding, to garrison their hearts and minds through Christ Jesus, Phil. iv. 7.

As they have more afflictions than others—the disciple of Christ must take up his cross—so they have more consolations than others; and their soul comforts are not seldom the sweetest, when their bodily crosses are greatest, (as the sweetest roses grow nearest the most stinking weeds,) although the blind world see them not. As a man standing, saith a divine, upon the sea-shore, seeth a great heap of waters, one wave riding upon the neck of another, and heareth the loud roarings thereof, but though he seeth the waters, yet he doth not see the wealth, the infinite riches, that lie buried in them; so wicked men see the waters, the afflictions, the conflicts, but not the wealth, the comforts, the inward joy of the children of God.

Thirdly, As this spiritual life is the most honourable and comfortable, so it is the most profitable life. No calling bringeth in such advantage as Christianity: 'Godliness is profitable unto all things,' 1 Tim. iv. 8. There is a universal gainfulness in real godliness. Plutarch telleth us that the Babylonians make above three hundred several commodities of the palm-tree; but there are many thousand benefits which godliness bringeth. No merchant ever had his vessels returned so richly laden, as he that tradeth heavenward.

Observe, reader, after the apostle's affirmation, his full confirmation of it: 'Godliness (saith he) is profitable unto all things; it hath the promise of this life, and that to come,'—*i.e.*, It hath heaven and earth entailed on it, and therefore it must needs be profitable. It giveth the Christian much in possession—the promise of this life; but infinitely more in reversion—the life that is to come.

The promises of God are exceeding great for their quantity, and precious for their quality, and they all belong to a godly man; he is called an heir of the promises, Heb. vi. 17. Whensoever the tree of the Scripture is shaken, whatsoever fruit of those precious promises falleth down, it falleth into the lap of a godly man. If at any time that box of costly ointment be broken, and sendeth forth its fragrant scent and virtue, it is to the refreshment only of the saints.

Godliness is profitable to thyself: 'If thou art wise, thou art

wise for thyself; and if a scorner, thou alone shalt bear it,' Prov. ix. 12. The sinner is nobody's foe so much as his own; the murdering pieces of sin which he dischargeth against God miss their mark, but do constantly recoil and wound himself. The saint is nobody's friend so much as his own; others fare the better for his great stock of grace, but the propriety in all, the comfort of all, and the profit by all, is his own. It enables him to give away the more at his door, but how rich a table doth he thereby keep for himself and his own family!

Godliness is profitable for thy children: 'The just man walketh in his integrity, and his children are blessed after him,' Prov. xx. 7. Personal piety is profitable to posterity, yet not of merit, but mercy. Though grace come not by generation, but donation, and though God hath mercy on whom he will, yet the seed of the saints are visibly nearer the quickening influences of the Spirit, than the children of others. When God saith he will be a God to the godly man and his children, I believe he intendeth more in that promise for the comfort of godly parents than most of them think of, Acts ii. 36, Gen. xvii. 7. The children of believers are heirs-apparent to the covenant of grace in their parents' right. Godliness is profitable in prosperity; it giveth a spiritual right to temporal good things. A gracious man holdeth his mercies *in capite*, in Christ, (that is his tenure,) as Christ is a joint-heir of all things, he being married to him by this spiritual life is a joint-heir with him. He enjoyeth earthly things by a heavenly title; and one penny enjoyed by special promise is far more worth than millions which ungodly men enjoy by a general providence, as the beasts of the field do their provender. It is godliness that causeth a sanctified improvement of mercies. Grace alone, like Christ, turneth water into wine, corporal mercies into spiritual advantages. The more God oils the wheels, the more cheerfully and swiftly he moveth in the way to heaven. The more showers of heaven fall down upon him, the more fruitful and abundant he is in the work of the Lord, as we see in that gracious king Jehoshaphat: 2 Chron. xvii. 5, 6, 'The Lord established the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah brought presents unto him, and he had riches and honour in abundance And his heart was lift up in the ways of God.' Mark, the more God's hand was enlarged in bounty, the more his heart was enlarged in duty. The more highly God thinks of David, the more lowly he thought of himself, 2 Sam. vii. 18. Outward mercies to a believer are a ladder by which he mounteth up nearer to heaven. Thus godliness, like the philosopher's stone, turneth iron and every-

thing into gold; but the want of this spiritual life causeth a cursed, hellish use of mercies. Ungodly men, like the spider, suck poison out of those flowers out of which the bees, the saints, suck honey. Their mercies are like cordials to a foul stomach, which do but increase the peccant humour. He feedeth on such plenty, that he surfeits himself because of their abundance, Job xxi. 7–14, 'Therefore they say unto the Almighty, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.' Like the Israelites, they make of the jewels which God giveth, a golden calf, and worship that instead of God.

Godliness is profitable in adversity; it maketh a Christian, like a rabbit, to thrive the better in frosty weather. The child of God learneth the better for the rod: 'Before he was afflicted he went astray, but now he keepeth God's word,' Ps. cxix. 67. Well may grace be called the divine nature, for it can bring not only light out of light, spiritual comfort and good out of outward good things, but also light out of darkness, good out of evil, gain out of losses, life out of death. It will, like Samson, fetch meat out of the eater; like the ostrich, digest stones; like Mithridates, fetch nourishment out of poison; when wicked men, like Ahaz, in their distress sin more against the Lord. As fire, the more it is kept in in an oven, the more it rageth, so doth corruption; but godly men, far otherwise, are by the fire of affliction the more refined and purified for their Master's use.

Godliness is profitable to thee while thou livest. In doubts it will direct thee, as a light to thy feet, and a lantern to thy paths; in dangers it will protect thee, by setting thee on high, and giving thee for a place of defence the munition of rocks; in wants it will supply thee, by affording thee bread in the word, when thou hast none on the board; and money in the promise, 1 Tim. iv. 8, which is by thousands the better, when thou hast none in thy purse; in thy pain it will ease thee; in disgrace it will honour thee; in sorrows it will comfort thee; in sickness it will strengthen, by causing thee to count the crosses of this life as nothing, and unworthy to be compared to the pleasures and glory which shall be revealed; in all distresses it will support thee, and make thee more than a conqueror over all, through him that loveth us, Rom. viii. 37.

Lastly, Godliness will be profitable to thee when thou diest. Death, which is the terrible of terribles to others, will be the comfortable of comfortables to thee. Thou needest never fear ill news in thine ears, having Christ and grace in thy heart; others shall not be

such unspeakable losers by death, but thou shalt be as great a gainer.

When thou liest on thy death-bed, where all thy friends, and riches, and earthly comforts will fail thee, this spiritual life is the good part which shall never be taken from thee. Thou mayest look upward, and see, as it were, God smiling on thee in the face of Christ, and hear him call to his angels to go and fetch thee, his child, who hast been all this while at nurse, home to the Father's house. Thou mayest look downward on thy relations, and with much faith and cheerfulness commit thy fatherless children to God, and bid thy weeping widow trust in him, who will be infinitely better to them than ten thousand of the richest, tenderest fathers and husbands in the world. Thou mayest look without thee into Scripture, and behold it as a garden full of sweet flowers, comforting cordials, refreshing, heart-reviving promises; and though it be an enclosure to others, it is open and free to thee. Thou mayest pick and choose, cull and gather, where thou pleasest, and needest not fear to be children. In the multitude of those perplexing thoughts which at that time may be within thee, thou mayest find choice comforts there to refresh thy spirit. If thou look within thee, thou shalt not have thy conscience, like an unquiet wife, frowning on thee, and scolding at thee; but thou shalt hear a little bird singing merrily and sweetly in thy breast, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.'

How joyfully mayest thou leave thy dearest wife, to go to thine infinitely dearer husband! How willingly mayest thou forsake thy lovely children, to go to thy loving God and Father! How freely mayest thou part with all thy friends, honours, and pleasures, to go to the congregation of the first-born, those rivers of pleasures, and eternal weight of glory! How cheerfully mayest thou bid adieu to nothing for all things, to stars and streams at best, for a full, immediate, eternal enjoyment of the Sun himself, and an immense ocean of happiness! With what a lively colour in thy face, and true comfort in thy heart, mayest thou behold that pale-faced messenger death, the thought of whom, though afar off, is death to others, entering into thy chamber, and coming up to thy bedside! How heartily welcome mayest thou bid him, as knowing that he cometh purposely to give thee actual possession of fulness of joy, unspeakable delights, a kingdom of glory that is eternal in the heaven! Oh the gain of godliness, the profit of piety! surely the price of this pearl is scarce known in this world!

A merchant will in the morning gain five hundred pounds by a bargain, whereas poor people work hard a whole day for a shilling. Such a rich trade driveth the godly man. Godliness brings in thousands and millions at a clap, when the moral and civil, yet unsanctified man, may work hard, and yet earn but some poor business, some outward blessing God may give them, and his eternal wrath at last.

Now, reader, consider if here be not abundant encouragement for thee presently and diligently to labour for this spiritual life. Is it not the gainfullest calling that ever was followed, the richest trade ever was driven? 'Why dost thou spend thy strength for what is not bread? and thy labour for that which will not satisfy? hearken to me, and eat thou that which is good, and let thy soul delight itself in fatness.'

As Saul said to his servants, 'Hear now, ye Benjamites; will the son of Jesse give you fields and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds?' 1 Sam. xxii. 7. So say I to thee, Hearken, O friend; will a sensual, fleshly life give thee such honour as to be the son of the infinite God, such comfort as to drink of the pure rivers of God's own pleasures, and will it make thee bold at death, and confident at judgment, an heir of heaven, and so happy in every condition? Can it do this? Can it give thee, as godliness can, so much in hand, and infinitely more in hope? If it can, I will give up my cause, and leave thee to thy choice; but if it cannot, as doubtless thou art convinced, so, unless thou art a heathen amongst Christians, why dost thou labour so much and so eagerly for the pampering and pleasing thy flesh, for the food that perisheth, and so little and so lazily for this food, which will endure unto everlasting life?

It was an excellent answer of one of the martyrs, when he was offered riches and honours if he would recant, Do but offer me somewhat that is better than my Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall see what I will say to you.

Reader, could the world, or the flesh, shew thee anything that were better, nay, equal, nay, that were but ten thousand degrees inferior to Christ and godliness, thou mightst have some colour for thy gratifying the flesh, and unwillingness to walk after the Spirit; but when the disproportion is so vast, that the one is not worthy in the least to be compared with the other—when the difference is as great as between a sea of honey and a spoonful of gall; a whole world of pearl, and a little heap of dirt; a heaven of happiness and a hell of horror—is it not unconceivable madness,

and inexcusable folly, to choose that life which is after the flesh, and refuse that which is after the Spirit?

Reader, if thou wouldst be truly honourable in the esteem of God himself, who is the fountain of all honour; if thou wouldst have those spiritual consolations, which can warm the heart in the coldest night of affliction; if thou wouldst be profitable to thy dear children, to thy own soul, be a real gainer in prosperity, in adversity, while thou livest, when thou diest; if thou wouldst, when thy wealth, and friends, and flesh, and heart shall fail thee, have God in Christ to be the strength of thy heart, and thy portion for ever; if thou wouldst, in thy greatest extremity, when thy soul shall be turned, naked of all earthly delights, out of thy body, escape the fury of roaring devils, and unquenchable burnings; if thou wouldst in that hour of thy misery find mercy, and be received into the place of endless bliss, then get this spiritual life, this true wisdom, to fear God and depart from evil. Get wisdom, get understanding; forget it not; above all thy gettings get wisdom. 'Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared to her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to all that lay hold upon her; and happy is every one that retaineth her,' Prov. iii. 13-18.

And now, reader, I have done this large use of exhortation, which is of such infinite concernment to thy precious soul; but what thou wilt do, or what use thou wilt make of it, I know not. Could I have told what other holy bait to have laid, which had been more likely to have caught thy soul, it is probable I should have laid it. I appeal to thy conscience, whether there be not unspeakable weight, and unquestionable truth, in the particulars which are laid down. Well, what sayest thou to them, and what effect have they wrought upon thee? Art thou resolved, through the help of heaven, speedily and diligently to practise the directions which I have from the almighty God enjoined thee? Is it not a thousand thousand pities that such endless, matchless happiness should be so graciously offered by God, and so unworthily neglected by men? that an empty, perishing world should be so eagerly pursued, and heartily embraced, when the unsearchable riches in Christ, the image of the blessed God, the eternal weight of glory, are basely undervalued,

and wretchedly despised? Good Lord, what tears of blood are sufficient to bewail this monstrous unthankfulness? Friend, if thou art truly resolved to obey the counsel of God, thou wilt have cause to bless that providence which called me to this task; and I may rejoice in thee, and thou in me, at the day of Christ. But if thou either delayest the work till thou art more at leisure, or dalliest about it, doing it as if thou didst it not, I am sure the greatest wrong will be to thyself; for, behold, thou sinnest against the Lord, and be confident, thy sins will sooner or later find thee out.

CHAPTER XX.

Comfort to true Christians.

I come, in the next place, to my last use, which will be of consolation. If they who have Christ for their life, shall have gain by their death, what comfort is here to the new-born creature! Here is wine indeed to make glad the heart of every one that is holy. Reader, art thou sanctified and alive in Christ? then thou art freed from all the misery which is mentioned in the first use, as the portion of the ungodly. I may say to thee, as Gryneus, when he had been reproving and threatening sinners, would, turning to the saint, say, *Bone vir, hoc nihil ad te;* Good man, all this is nothing to thee. Though they are losers, thou shalt be a gainer by death. Come but with the mouth of faith, and thou mayest suck much honey from this comb, thou mayest draw much milk of consolation from this breast; to thee to die shall be gain. Surely here is enough to ballast thy soul, and keep it steady, in the most tempestuous condition, and to balance and weigh down the greatest, the heaviest affliction.

Jerome comforted the hermit that was in a wilderness sad and pensive, *Meditare cœlum et tamdiu non eris in eremo.*

If thou hadst hope only in this life, thou wert of all men most miserable; but because thou hast hope beyond this life, thou mayest be of all men most comfortable.

'Should such a man as I fly?' Neh. vi. 11. Should such a man as thou fear, that art heir to a crown, to a kingdom? Luke xii. 32, 'Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's pleasure to give you a kingdom.' In thy greatest losses this may support thee, that death will be thy gain, by giving thee possession of a life which will make amends for all. If a heathen could say, it is unbecom-

ing a Roman spirit to cry out, I am undone, while Cæsar was safe, sure it is more uncomely for a Christian to complain, as if he were undone, when his soul is safe, his eternal estate is secure.

For thy help, I shall digest this use into this method briefly.

First, To shew thee against what it is comfortable.

Secondly, Wherein it is comfortable.

CHAPTER XXI.

Comfort against the world's fury, and Satan's rage.

For the first, it is comfortable, first, Against the opposition of the world: 'The world will hate thee, because thou art not of the world,' John xv. 19. She is a paradise to her children and lovers, but a purgatory to aliens and strangers. Whilst thou art in the stormy sea of this world, thou art a ship bound for the straits. He that goeth towards the sun, shall have his shadow following him; but he that goeth from it, shall have it fly before. He that goeth towards the Sun of righteousness, shall be sure to have these shadows, these afflictions, at his heels.

Infinite wisdom seeth fit to imbitter the breasts of the creatures to wean thee from them. Trouble upon earth is one legacy which thy Saviour hath left thee: 'In the world ye shall have trouble,' John xvi. 33. The soldiers were to have his garments; Joseph was to have his body; his Father was to have his soul; he had his cross left, and that he bequeaths to his disciples. But be of good cheer, he did not only leave thee his cross, but hath also made thee heir to a crown: 'I give to them eternal life.'

He never looked over the threshold of heaven, that cannot more rejoice that he shall be glorious, than mourn in present that he is miserable.[1]

Oppose thy future felicity to thy present misery, thy happiness at death to the hardships thou meetest with in life; this will be the way to counterpoise the temptation, and to keep thee from fainting in tribulation, whilst thou lookest not at the things which are seen, which are temporal, but at the things which are not seen, which are eternal, 2 Cor. iv.

I have read of one Giacopo Senzaro, an Italian, who having been long in love, and much crossed about his match, filled a pot full of black stones, only one white stone among them, and being asked

[1] Bishop Hall, Heaven upon Earth, sec. 14.

the reason, answered, There will come one white day (meaning his marriage day) which will make amends for all my black days. So whatsoever poverty, nakedness, hunger, cold, pain, shame, losses, thou undergoest here in this world, how many soever thy black days are of trials and troubles, of persecutions and opposition, thou mayest say, There is one white day of death, one long day of eternity coming, which will make amends for all.

It was a brave speech of Luther, when he was demanded where he would be when the emperor should with all his forces fall upon the elector of Saxony, who was the chief protector of Protestants; he answered, *Aut in cœlo, aut sub cœlo;* Either in heaven, or under heaven.

Why shouldst thou be discouraged at any loss, considering thou hast a treasure in heaven, a more enduring substance? at any disgrace, considering thou art heir to a crown of glory? at any pain or sorrow, when thou art entitled to fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore.

No storm should disquiet thee, that shall shortly enjoy an everlasting calm. What a pitiful thing that was, that Alexander, that was lord almost of the world, should be troubled that ivy would not grow in his garden at Babylon; and is it not a poor thing for thee, that art a child of God, the spouse of Christ, the temple of the Spirit, an heir of the most glorious, rich, and delightful kingdom that ever was, to lie whining and pining if thy head do but ache, or thy estate decrease, or thy friend forsake thee? For shame; remember who thou art, and to what thou art called, and say, as the martyr, Hold out faith and patience, your work is almost at end. Thou shalt ere long leave this world, and all its evils, and go where there is neither sorrow nor sin, and indeed there can be no affliction there, because there will be no corruption there, which is the original of all miseries. As there cannot be any thunder or lightning in the upper region, because the vapours which are the materials of it cannot ascend so high; so, because no unclean thing can be there, therefore no sorrow, no suffering, can be there.

How may this comfort thee! Basil tells us[1] how the martyrs, that were cast out naked in a winter's night, being to be burned the next day, solaced their souls with these words: Sharp is the cold, but sweet is paradise; troublesome is the way, but pleasant shall be the end of our journey. Let us endure cold a little, and the patriarch's bosom shall soon warm us; let our feet burn a while, that we may dance for ever with angels.

2. It is a comfort against the temptations of the devil. Whilst

[1] Basil εἰς τοὺς μαρτ.

thou livest in this world, thou art liable to his wiles. If thou wilt go to heaven, so boundless is his malice that he raiseth all the powers of hell against thee, and forceth thee to fight every foot of the way. He is the strong man that hath full possession of carnal, unregenerate ones, and therefore all is at peace with them, Mat. xii. What need a captain bend his forces against a town which hath delivered up itself into his hands? What need he plant his cannons and batteries against these gates which are already set open to him? This jailer doth not trouble himself much about those prisoners which are fast in his dungeon, with his irons on their legs, and are led captive by him at his will, 1 Tim. ii. 26; but for thee, who hast by the help of Christ broken prison, and in part got out of his power, he raiseth all the country with hue-and-cry to bring thee back to thy old place of bondage. But be comforted, Christ hath conquered him already in his own person as thy head; is daily conquering him in thee, his member, by his Spirit; and will shortly crush him fully under thy feet,[1] Rom. xvi. 20. Some refer that *shortly* to the day of judgment, which will come shortly, and wherein Satan shall be utterly crushed under all the saints' feet for ever. And it is as true of the day of death, in reference to every particular saint. As when a man dieth, all those vexatious law-suits, with which he was before molested, do cease; so when the believer dieth, all those false actions which Satan had commenced against him in the court of his conscience, and all that inward trouble which did arise thereupon, do all cease.

It is no sign now, O Christian, if thou resistest, that thou art assaulted by the wicked one. A thief will not break into a house that is empty. A pirate will not fight but for some considerable prize. A father will not seek to destroy his own children. Temptation is no sign of God's hatred, but of the devil's. But let this be thy solace, that within a few days thou shalt be at rest, not only from thy own labours, but also from Satan's snares and suggestions. God doth thee much good by them now; the noise of those guns causeth the conies to hasten to their burrows, and the birds to their places of refuge. The more the tops of sound trees are shaken with the wind, the more deeply their roots are fixed in the earth; the more eagerly Satan followeth thee, the faster thou fliest, and the closer thou clingest to Jesus Christ. But God will do thee the greatest good without them; and when that shall be, thou shalt be wholly freed from them. Since the devils were cast out of heaven, we read of their being sometimes in the sea, Mat. viii. 33;

[1] Paræus *in loc.*

sometimes in the earth, Job i. 7; and sometimes in the air, Eph. ii. 3; and they are called principalities and spiritual wickednesses in high places, Eph. vi. 12, but never in heaven. They aspire to get as high as they can, but they can get no further than the air; Satan and his angels find no more place in heaven, Rev. xii. 8.

Now what comfort is this, O Christian, that thou shalt serve the Lord without distraction, without temptations!

CHAPTER XXII.

Comfort against our own corruptions, our own or other believers' dissolution.

3. It is comfortable against the corruptions of thine own heart. What is it now that is thy greatest sorrow? Is it not thy sin? These are the weights which hang on the clock of thy heart, and will not suffer it to rest day or night. Well, rejoice in hope; at death all these Achans, which are the troublers of thy peace, shall be stoned to death; all these Jonahs, which cause such storms in thy soul, shall be cast overboard; all these Hamans, which seek the ruin of thee and thy people, shall be executed.

Now it is thy great care in every ordinance to kill thy sins. Dost thou not, like Joab, set the Uriah of thy beloved lust in the forefront of every duty, and retire from it, out of pious policy, that it may be slain? And when at any time it pleaseth the captain of thy salvation to send the supplies of his Spirit, and wound mortally thy corruption, that it lieth gasping and dying before thee, dost thou not look up to Christ and say, as Cushi to David concerning dead Absalom, 'Would to God that all the enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, were as that young man is.' Lord, that all my sins might drink of the same cup, and be served the same sauce? Blessed be the Lord my God, which hath avenged me this day of mine enemy. If God should thrust the knife of mortification up to the haft in the very hearts of all thy sins, that thou couldst see thy pride, distrust, unthankfulness, hardness of heart, and every corruption in a gore-blood, fetching their last breath, would it not be a lovely sight to thee? Wouldst thou not look upon it with as much content as Hannibal did upon a pitful of the blood of men, when he cried out, *O formosum spectaculum!* O beautiful sight! Or as that queen, that cried out, when she saw her subjects lie dead before her eyes,

the goodliest tapestry that ever she beheld! At death all this shall be done for thee. One touch of Jesus Christ at death will quite dry up that issue of corruption. Death will give thee a writ of ease from all those weights and sins which do so easily beset thee. Thou shalt be without fault before the throne of God, Rev. xiv. 5.

Will it not indeed be a brave world with thee in the other world, when thou shalt have as much holiness as thy heart can wish or hold? If God should grant thee such a request upon earth, that thou shouldst have as much of his image and of his Spirit as thou couldst desire, wouldst thou not think thyself the happiest man alive? I am confident thou wouldst; and also that nothing less than perfect purity would be thy prayer. Well, death will help thee to this: 'When I awake, I shall be satisfied with thy likeness,' Ps. xvii. 15.

Now thou hast enough to stay thy stomach, but then thou shalt have a full meal. When the Israelites went out of Egypt towards Canaan, there was not one feeble person among them. When the Christian entereth into the true Canaan, he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David, nay, as the angel of the Lord before him.

When thy frame of nature shall be ruined, thy frame of grace shall be perfected and raised to the height of glory.

4. It is comfortable against thy dissolution. To thee to die is gain; death will be thy passage into eternal life. Thou needest not fear death as a foe; it will be one of thy best friends. How did this hope of happiness at death hold up the martyrs' heads above water, and carry them through those boisterous waves of violent and cruel deaths, with the greatest serenity and alacrity of spirit.

Agesilaus, king of Sparta, used to say, that they which live virtuously are not yet blessed persons, but they had attained true felicity who died virtuously.[1]

What is there in death, that thou art so afraid of it? Wilt thou fear a bee without a sting? Dost thou not know it had but one sting for Christ and Christians, and that was left in Christ the head; whereby now, though it may buzz and make a noise about their ears, yet it can never sting or hurt the members. The waters of Jordan, though tempestuous before, yet were calm, and stood still, when the ark was to pass over.

If thou hadst been banished many years from thy dear relations, whom thou lovedst as thy own soul, and from thy rich possessions and comforts, which might have made thy life pleasant and delight-

[1] Xenophon.

ful, into a place of bondage, a valley of tears, a prison where thy feet were fettered with irons, and thy face furrowed with weeping; wouldst thou be afraid of a messenger that came to knock off thy shackles, and fetch thee out of prison, and carry thee to those friends and comforts?[1] And why art thou afraid of death, which cometh to free thee from thy bondage to Satan, sin, and sorrow, and to give thee present possession of the glorious liberty of the sons of God? Art thou afraid to be rid of thy corruptions? of Satan's temptations? of the world's persecutions? Art thou afraid to go to saints, where are no sinners, to Christ without his cross, to the full, immediate, eternal fruition of the blessed God? Then why art thou afraid to die, and dost not rather desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ, knowing that while thou art present in the body, thou art absent from the Lord?[2] 2 Cor. v. 6. Well, the best of it is, thou art more afraid than hurt.

It is well observed by a judicious expositor, that the periphrasis of death, mentioned John xiii. 1, where it is called a departing out of the world, and a going to the Father, doth belong to all the children of God; it is to them but a going out of the world to their dear and loving Father. And questionless this was that which made the saints so desirous of death. Basil, when the emperor's lieutenant threatened to kill him, said, I would he would, for then he would quickly send me to my Father, to whom I now live, and to whom I desire to hasten. Calvin, in his painful sickness, was never heard to complain, but often lifting up his eyes to heaven, to cry out, 'How long, Lord! how long, Lord!'

It is reported of a heathen, Epaminondas,[3] that when he was wounded with a dart at Mantinea, in a battle against the Lacedæmonians, and told by the chirurgeons that when the dart was drawn out of his body he must needs die, he called for his squire, and asked him whether he had not lost his shield? He told him no; whereupon he bade them pull out the dart, and so died. Surely, Christian, thou hast more cause to die with courage, when thou hast not lost thy God, nor thy soul, nor anything that was worth the keeping.[4]

5. It is comfortable against the death of thy friends and relations which die in the Lord: 'To die is gain.' If it be their gain, why should it be thy grief? Nature will teach thee to mourn, but

[1] Mors non vitam rapit, sed reformat.—*Prudentius.*

[2] Calvin *in loc.* Jewel was offended at one that in his sickness prayed for his life.

[3] Plutarch in Vit. Dicique beatus ante obitum nemo, &c.

[4] Non æstimendum quod nos liberat ab omni timendo.—*Tertull.*

grace must moderate that mourning. We may water our plants, but must not drown them. We may sorrow, but not as they which have no hope, lest we sin.

When Anaxagoras was told that both his sons were dead, he boldly answered the messenger, I knew that I begat mortal creatures.

The people were enraged and perplexed at the death of Romulus, but were afterwards quieted and comforted with the news which Proclus brought, that he saw him in glory riding up to heaven; so when thou art sorrowing for the death of thy child or husband, or father or mother, or brother or sister, that sleep in Jesus, thou shouldst hearken to the news which faith brings, that it saw them filled with joy, mounting up to heaven, and there enjoying rivers of pleasures and a weight of glory; and surely if after such news thou shouldst continue weeping, it should be for joy.

Friend, this text containeth choice sweetmeats for thee to feed on at the funeral of thy dearest godly friend.

I suppose if thy relation died out of Christ, thou hast not a little cause of sorrow;[1] and probably that was the sharp edge of the sword which wounded the soul of David for the death of Absalom, that he died in his sins: his fear was that his son died, not only in rebellion against the father of his flesh, but also against the Father of spirits. But when thy relation dieth in the Lord, thou hast surely more cause to rejoice that thou ever hadst such a friend, or relation, who shall to eternity be employed in the cheerful glorifying and beatifical vision of God, than to mourn that thou hast lost him for a little time. It was a memorable speech of William Hunter's mother, when her son was to die a violent death, (for he suffered martyrdom under Bonner:) I am glad, saith she, that ever I was so happy as to bear such a child, that can find in his heart to lose his life for Christ. And then, kneeling down on her knees, she said, I pray God strengthen thee, my son, to the end; I think thee as well bestowed as any child that ever I bore.

Take the counsel of the Spirit, not to sorrow as others which have no hope; and know this for thy comfort, that 'those which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up to-

[1] Lugeatur mortuus, sed ille quem gehenna suscipit, quem Tartarus devorat.—*Jer.*

gether with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord: wherefore comfort one another with these words,' 1 Thes. iv. 13 to the end.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The excellency of heaven.

I shall shew thee farther in what respects it is comfortable, and then conclude.

First, It is comfortable if thou considerest the excellency of this gain. As David said of Goliath's sword, so I may of this gain of a saint by death, There is none like it. Nicephorus[1] tells us of one Agbarus, a great man, that hearing so much of Christ's fame, by reason of the miracles that he wrought, he sent a painter to take his picture, and that the painter, when he came, was not able to do it, because of the radiancy and divine splendour which sat on Christ's face. Whether this be true or no I leave to the author; but, without controversy, there is such a radiancy on the glorified head and members in heaven that none can conceive it, much less describe it.

There are three things which will speak a little how great the gain of every godly man is by death.

1. The foretastes of it do shew that it is excellent. Saints here have the first-fruits, Rom. viii. 23, and they do speak what the harvest will be.

The Jewish Rabbis report that when Joseph, in the years of plenty, had gathered much corn in Egypt, he threw the chaff into the river Nilus, that so, flowing to the neighbour countries, they might know what abundance was laid up for themselves and others. So God is pleased, that we might know the plenty in heaven, to give us some sign, some taste of it here upon earth. He enableth us to conclude, if his ways are ways of pleasantness, how pleasant will the end be! If his people have songs in their pilgrimage, in their banishment, surely they have hallelujahs in their country, in their Father's house. If there be so much goodness laid out upon them in this valley of tears, how infinite is that goodness which is laid up for them in the Master's joy.

Christian, didst thou never taste and see that the Lord is gracious? Didst thou never in thy closet enjoy fellowship with the

[1] In Hist. Eccles.

Father, and with Jesus Christ his Son. Didst thou never find one day in God's courts, nay, one hour, better than a thousand elsewhere? Did the Lord Jesus never call thee aside from others, and carry thee into his banqueting-house, and cause his banner over thee to be love? Did he never kiss thee with the kisses of his lips, and embrace thee in his dearest arms? Hast thou not sometimes seen the smiles of his face, and found them better than life? and hearing his voice, known thy heart burning toward him with love? Dost thou not remember at such a time he took thee up into his chariot, and gave thee a token for good, shewing thee a glimpse of thy future glory, solacing thy soul with a sense of his favour, ravishing thy heart with hopes of thy eternal happiness; when thou didst wonder exceedingly at the creature's emptiness, and befool thyself for doting so much upon nothing; when thou didst see sin in its opposition and contrariety to the divine nature, and thy own welfare, and didst curse thy lusts with the most bitter curses, whereby thou hadst offended so gracious a Lord; when thou didst behold the Lord Jesus in all his embroidery and glory; oh how lovely was he in thine eyes! how sweet was he to thy taste! how precious was he in thy esteem! how closely was thy soul joined to him! how largely was thy spirit drawn out after him! how earnestly didst thou desire to be ever with him, when thou thoughtest, What joy is there in being with Christ, if there be so much in Christ's being with me! How happy are they that enjoy the fountain, if some small streams are so pleasant! when thou saidst, 'Master, it is good to be here, let us build a tabernacle. My soul is filled with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips. One thing do I desire of the Lord, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord for ever and ever.' This is the foretaste of glory; by this thou mayest conceive what heaven will be. As Fulgentius, when he beheld the beauty and bravery, the glory and gallantry, of Rome, cried out, If earthly Rome be so glorious, how glorious is heavenly Rome![1] So thou mayest gather, if thou hast so much joy when thou hast heaven only in hope, what joy shalt thou have when thou shalt have it in hand.

If the seed-time be so joyous, how great will the joy of harvest be! If the promise can stay one that is ready to die, surely the performance will be better than life from the dead.

If Jerusalem below be paved with gold, then, questionless, Jerusalem above is paved with pearl.

[1] Si talis est Roma terrestris, qualis est Roma cælestis.

2. The price paid for it speaketh the excellency of it. Where there is honesty and righteousness in the seller, and wisdom in the buyer, there the price of a thing will speak its worth. Now, here there was infinite righteousness in God the seller, and the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in Christ the purchaser; therefore the price laid down for heaven will speak the excellency of it. If the price were very great, the place must be very glorious.

Heaven is called the purchased possession, Eph. i. 14, because it was bought with the blood of the Son of God. Reader, wonder at this price, and at this place: 'We are bold to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,' Heb. x. 19.

When thou hearest of a purchase on earth that costeth a hundred thousand pounds or a million, wouldst not thou presently conclude, Surely that must be an incomparable seat for delight! what pleasant springs, what stately rooms, what curious contrivances, what unheard-of excellencies, must be there! without question all things imaginable for richness, glory, and comfort. But when thou readest in Scripture of a purchase which cost the blood of God, to which all the wealth in the world is as dirt, as nothing, sit down and consider what a house, what a heaven that must be, if thou considerest God did infinitely love his Son, and was not so prodigal of his blood as to let one drop more be shed than heaven was worth.

Besides, canst thou think that the Lord Jesus would humble himself to such a contemptible birth, live such a miserable life die such a lamentable, painful death, to purchase low, mean things, or anything less than eminent, excellent, unspeakable, unconceivable happiness?

3. The titles given to it do abundantly speak the excellency of it. The holy men of God do, as it were, strive for expressions and words to set out the glory, richness, joy, magnificence of this gain.

To the weary it is rest, Isa. ii. 57; Rev. xiv. 13. To the hungry, it is hidden manna, Rev. ii. 17. To the thirsty, rivers of pleasures, Ps. xxxvi. 8. To the sorrowful, the joy of the Lord, Mat. xxv. 21; fulness of joy, Ps. xvi. 11. To the disgraced, glory, Rom. viii. 18; a crown of glory, 1 Pet. v. 4; a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 2 Cor. iv. 17. To them that walk in darkness and see no light, it is the inheritance of the saints in light, Col. i. 12. To them that are dying, it is life, Col. iii. 3; yea, eternal life, John x. 28. It is a kingdom, Luke xii. 32; a kingdom that cannot be shaken, Heb. xii. 28. Where all the inhabitants are kings and queens, Rev. i. 5; with palms and sceptres in their hands, Rev. vii. 9; crowns on their heads, James

ii. 5; sitting on thrones, Rev. iii. 21, and shall reign with Christ for ever and ever, Rev. xxii. 5.

It is a being in Abraham's bosom, Luke xvi. 22; a being with Christ, Phil. i. 23; a being ever with the Lord, 1 Thes. iv. 17; a seeing God as he is, 1 John iii. 2; a seeing God face to face; a knowing God as we are known of God, 1 Cor. xiii. 12; and many more expressions doth the Spirit of God use to describe the excellency of the saints' happiness, and why in such variety of phrases, but to assure us that whatsoever is requisite or desirable in order to happiness it is there? The Holy Ghost doth gather, as it were, a posy of the most sweet, beautiful, pleasant, choice flowers that grow in the whole garden of this world, and telleth us this is heaven. Do but abstract all the imperfections that attend the riches, and honour, and pleasures of earthly kingdoms, and they may be dark resemblances to shadow out the glory and excellency of the heavenly kingdom. The philosophers could say, that happiness must consist in such a state wherein was an aggregation of all good things; so that though a man had all good things, and wanted but one, he could not be called a happy man. Therefore in Scripture the Hebrew word for happiness is in the plural number, because not twenty or forty things can make a man happy, but there must be all good things; and for this reason the Holy Ghost useth such variety of resemblances to represent this blessedness, to shew that it hath all desirable good things.

Reader, when thou art feeding on all those glorious descriptions of heaven that are set before thee on the table of the Scripture, do not swallow them altogether, but chew them severally, and thou mayest get much spiritual nourishment out of them. As, for example, it is called the joy of thy Lord, or the Master's joy, Mat. xxv. 21. Now, what joy must that be? What infinite, inconceivable joy hath the blessed God, the fountain of all joy, and the God of all consolations! Thou shalt partake of the very same joy according to thy capacity; thou shalt sit at the same table, drink of the same cup, and feed on the same dainties with his Majesty. Can it then enter into thy heart to imagine either the pureness or fulness of thy Lord's joy? Is not the best joy of the servants on earth sorrow, and their greatest mirth mourning, to the Master's joy in heaven? 'Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord;' a joy too big to enter into us, we must enter into it. A joy more meet for the Lord than the servant; yet such a Lord do we serve as will honour his servants with his own joy.

Again, it is called a city whose builder and maker is God, Heb.

xi. 10; hence thou mayest gather, that structure must be beautiful indeed which hath such a builder. What a glorious fabric must that be which hath such a workman as he is, who hath infinite wisdom to contrive, who hath infinite richness to adorn, infinite bounty to bestow, and infinite power to erect! What a city must that be! If poor mortals can set up such stately buildings, what a place, what a palace, must that be whose builder and maker is God!

Besides, it is called the Father's house. Here I might expatiate, and tell thee that great princes have great seats often for their servants, but they have glorious ones indeed for themselves. In their own houses they manifest all their wealth and worth, their bounty and bravery, their honour and magnificence. What a house, then, hath the King of kings for his mansion-house! If the several excellencies of all the princes' palaces in the world were united in one; suppose it had the foundations of marble, the floors of pearl, the ceilings of wrought gold, all the varieties of Babel, the glory of Solomon's house, the richness of the temple at Jerusalem; suppose it had the stateliest rooms, the pleasantest music, the greatest dainties, the richest furniture, that this inferior world could afford; suppose all the choice perfections of the whole creation here below were extracted, and the quintessence of them all bestowed upon it, yet after all this it would be but like a house of dirt made by children, in comparison of the Father's house, of that house not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens. But, Christian, I leave these titles to be considered and enlarged in thy own meditations.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The certainty that saints shall obtain heaven.

Secondly, It is comfortable if thou considerest the certainty of it. It is not only excellent, but certain. Though it were never so excellent, yet if it were not certain, it would be but little comfort; but know, to the joy of thine heart, that as heaven is a place of unspeakable excellency, so thy enjoyment of it, O new-born creature, is of unquestionable certainty. It is worthy our admiration how many ways the most high God, out of condescension to our capacities, and compassion to our infirmities, doth confirm and insure this gain by death to believers.

1. By his promise: Luke xii. 22, 'Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's pleasure to give you a kingdom;' so John iii. 16. 'Now all

the promises of God are yea and amen,' 2 Cor. i. 20; they are as good as performances. Not one good thing faileth of all the good things which the Lord promiseth, Joshua xxiii. 14. But mark, friend, one place for many: Titus i. 2, 'In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, hath promised.' God's people are a people that will not lie, Isa. lxiii. 8, but God is a God that cannot lie; it is impossible for God to lie. Every lie proceedeth either from weakness or from wickedness. Some are weak—they would be as good as their words, but cannot; others are wicked—they can be as good as their words, but will not. Neither of these can be charged on the blessed God; he is able to perform his promise, for he is the almighty God, Gen. xvii. 1. 'I know that thou canst do all things,' saith Job, chap. xlii. 2. Omnipotency never met with a difficulty too hard for it. The promises of God will eat their way through all the Alps of opposition, because he is a God of infinite power; and as he is able, and free from weakness, so he is righteous and holy, and so free from wickedness: 'There is no unrighteousness in him,' Ps. xcii. 15. 'He is light, and in him is no darkness at all,' 1 John i. 5. There is not the least spot in this sun; his truth reacheth unto the heavens, and his faithfulness is above the clouds.

2. By an oath God hath confirmed it: Heb. vi. 17, 18, 'Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation.' Thou wouldst take the word of a good man, and wilt thou not take the word of a God?[1] But wonder at his goodness; he tendereth further security by his oath, nay, by the greatest oath imaginable. Having no greater to swear by, he swore by himself, Heb. vi. 16.

3. By his seals. We have the broad seal of heaven, the seals of the covenant, to confirm this to us. The sacraments are seals of the covenant of grace, Rom. iv. 11; and we have the privy seal of the Spirit, Eph. iv. 30. So that if the hand and seal of a God will do it, heaven is insured to all that are sanctified.

4. By an earnest, that makes a bargain sure: 'Who hath sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts,' 2 Cor. i. 22.

When Christ went from us, he left his Spirit with us, to assure us that he would come to us; and took our flesh with him, to assure us that we shall come to him.

[1] Omnia verba Dei sunt juramenta quoad certitudinem, saith Philo; sed infirmitatis nostræ causa, ut si non credamus Deo promittenti, credamus saltem pro nostra salute juranti.

5. By first-fruits, Rom. viii. 23, which did assure the Jews of their harvest.

6. By the death of Christ. Heaven is given to the holy by testament, by will: John xvii. 24, 'Father, I will,' saith the then dying Saviour, 'that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.' Now, because a testament or will is of no force whilst the testator liveth, therefore Christ died to make his will valid, Heb. ix. 16, 17.

CHAPTER XXV.

The eternity of the saints' happiness in heaven.

Thirdly, It is comfortable if thou considerest the eternity of it. Though it were never so excellent and certain, yet if it were for a short time only, it would afford but little comfort; nay, the greater our joy were in the possession of it, the greater our sorrow would be in our separation from it. The very thought of ever losing such incomparable happiness would be a deep wound to a Christian's heart, and without question abate much of his joy whilst he did enjoy it. Nothing less than eternity can perfect the saint's felicity. And, lo, here it is; thy gain is not only of unspeakable excellency, and unquestionable certainty, but also durable even unto eternity.

The pleasures of the saints are for evermore, Ps. xvi. 11. The pleasures of the wicked on earth are like a standing pool, quickly dried up by the scorching heat of God's wrath, leaving nothing behind save the mud of vexation; but the pleasures of the godly in heaven are rivers of pleasures, running over, and running ever, because they flow from the fountain of living waters.

The joy of the sinner is like the crackling of thorns under a pot—it may make a bustling noise, but quickly goeth out; but the joy of a saint will be like the fire upon the altar, which never goeth out, day nor night: 'Their joy shall no man take from them,' John xvi.

The glory of a Christian there will be an eternal weight of glory. The shame of a Christian here is transitory, like a cloud upon the face of the sun, which will soon be scattered; and the honour of a graceless man here is short, like a fleeting shadow; as Sejanus[1] was one day adored like a god, and a little after, with the greatest

[1] Tacitus.

ignominy, committed to the jail. But the honour of a Christian there is an eternal noontide of glory. Heaven is an everlasting home to the saints, Luke xvi. 9; 2 Cor. v. 1, when their earthly tabernacles are dissolved, they enjoy the building of God, 'an house not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens.'

They enjoy the society of the good for ever; they sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, Mat. viii. 11. Standing is a posture of going, or at least of but staying little; but sitting is a posture of staying long. They shall enjoy God for ever; they shall ever be with the Lord, 1 Thes. iv. 17. The saints shall in heaven be like angels, Mat. xx. 30. Now angels always behold the face of their Father,[1] Mat. xviii. 10. Now God sometimes sheweth himself unto, and sometimes hides his face from, his children, that a godly man may say to Christ, as Jacob to his wives, 'I perceive that thy Father's countenance is not towards me as at other times,' Gen. xxxi. 5. Some sin or other, like a cloud, interposeth, and hindereth the light of his gracious countenance; but there will be no cloud, or mist of sin, and the Sun of righteousness will ever behold the soul with the same favourable aspect. And therefore the joy and happiness of the saint will be ever like the moon at the full, because that Sun will ever look upon him with the same lightsome countenance.

Oh what a long day will eternity be to the damned, and what a short day to be saved! Eternal pain will make every moment seem eternity; eternal pleasure will make eternity seem but a moment; the joys there will be so great and many, that the days there will seem small and few; the delights there will spring every moment so fresh and full, that a Christian, like Jacob, will think them but few days, for the love he will bear to them.

Reader, if thou art in Christ, ponder much in time the eternity of pleasure which is prepared for thee. Consider, if there be so much felicity in seeing the lovely face of God in the glass of his ordinances for one hour, what will there be when thou shalt see him face to face, and always behold the face of thy Father!

When Christ and thy soul meet sweetly in a duty on the Lord's day, and thou sittest under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit is sweet unto thy taste, thou thinkest the duty is done too soon, and the Sabbath is too short; thou couldst wish the sun would stand still, as in the days of Joshua, and that day to be longer; but be encouraged, though thy Sabbaths now begin and end, yet

[1] Angels, in the Syriac, have their name from a word which signifieth face, because it is their honour and office always to behold God's face.

within a few days thou shalt begin that eternal Sabbath which shall never end.

Certain it is, saith Mr Robert Bolton, in his epistle before *Discourse of True Happiness*, that if a man were crowned with the royal state, and imperial command of all the kingdoms upon earth, if his heart were enlarged to the utmost of all created capacities, and filled with all the exquisite and unmixed pleasures that the reach of mortality and most ambitious curiosity could possibly devise, and might without any interruption or distaste enjoy them the length of the world's duration, they were all nothing to the precious and peerless comforts of the kingdom of grace but for one hour. I speak the truth in Christ, and use no hyperbole—the Spirit of all comfort, and consciences of all true Christians, bearing me witness. What then will it be, my friend, to enjoy the unconceivable comforts of the kingdom of glory for ever? If one day in God's courts on earth be better to thee than a thousand elsewhere, how happy wilt thou be when thou shalt dwell in the heavenly house of the Lord, and that for ever, ever! when thou shalt be a pillar in the temple of thy God, and shalt go no more out for ever! Rev. iii. 12. Oh sweet word, ever, ever! thou art music to the ear, and honey to the taste, and melody to the heart indeed; to be free from all evil, both of sin and suffering, and to be for ever free from them, to be with the Lord, enjoying all good imaginable, and ever to be with the Lord. Oh how much worth doth this one word *ever* add to the saints' portion in the other world!

Mortality is a flaw in all earthly tenures, which abateth their price, and embittereth their pleasures; but eternity is a diamond which sparkleth most radiantly in the crown of glory, and maketh it beyond all expression or comparison weighty.

Christian, how may this persuade thee to be exact in thy walking with God, when in doing of his commands there is such great reward! Thy temporal obedience shall have an eternal recompense. If Zeuxis, the famous painter, was so curious in drawing his lines, because he painted for eternity, how exact shouldst thou be in all thy duties, how curious in the whole course of thy life, when thou dost all for eternity!

How may this support thee in the greatest dangers! Thy sufferings are temporal, but thy solace shall be eternal. If Saul, when called to an earthly kingdom for a short time, could hold his peace, when men despised and derided him, surely thou mayest be steady in the greatest storm, and in all hardships bear up thy spirit with the lively hope of that heavenly eternal kingdom to which thou art

called. Dost thou not know that all the suffering of this life, though all the sufferings of the mystical body of Christ were laid on thy back, are not worthy to be compared to that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, Rom. viii. 18.

Thus thy felicity in heaven will be complete felicity, and thy consolation in the forethoughts of it may well be a full consolation, since for its perfections it is unspeakable, thy fruition of it is unquestionable, and thy condition in it will be unchangeable and eternal. When thou hast filled thy heart with that fulness of joy, and bathed thy soul in those rivers of pleasures, as many millions of years as there have been minutes since the creation, and after that as many thousand ages as there are creatures great and small in heaven, earth, and sea; and after that as many thousand millions of ages as all the men in the world can reckon up all the time of their lives; yet, after all this, thou shalt not have one moment less to continue in heaven, and enjoy that perfect happiness. The very greatest and highest numerations and multiplications of time are but drops, yea, ciphers, and nothing, to this boundless, bottomless, ocean of eternity. For of eternity, as Drexelius saith, rightly, There is no

FINIS.

THE FADING OF THE FLESH.

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

To the Courteous Mrs Jane Swinnock, widow of Mr Caleb Swinnock, late of Maidstone, deceased.

Honoured Cousin,—The whole world is fitly termed by the Holy Ghost, a sea of glass, Rev. iv. 6. A sea for its tempestuousness; all the passengers who sail on it are sure to be driven to and fro with the surging waves, and high winds of sorrows. Man entereth on this stage of the world crying, goeth off groaning, and the part which he acteth is chiefly tragical, his whole life being little else, from the womb to the tomb, but a chain of crosses, and a circle of sufferings; he is tossed like a tennis-ball, from hazard to hazard, till at last he fall to the earth. A sea of glass, for its brittleness; glass is soon broken, be it never so much gilded. The fashion of this world passeth away; all its carnal comforts perish with it. The possessions of it are corruptible; gold and silver are liable to that rust which will consume them. The relations in it are mutable; whilst we are refreshing ourselves with those pleasant flowers, and embracing them in our breast, and sticking them in our bosoms, they wither. The Jews at this day have a custom, saith one, when a couple are married, to break the glass wherein the bridegroom and the bride have drank; thereby to admonish them, that though at present they are joined together, yet ere long they must be parted asunder. The saints of God themselves are not privileged from such arrests; nay, those vessels which are most richly laden go often deepest in these waters. The howling wilderness is the direct way to the heavenly Canaan.

The late providence which removed your loving and beloved husband (I hope to heaven) hath taught you the truth of these particulars. The loss of such a relation must needs be a sore affliction. The nearer the union is, the more difficult the separation. Husband and wife are one flesh, therefore to part them cannot but

be painful; but grace will help you both to submit to that blow which is so grievous to nature, and to be the better for it.

It was some comfort to me to observe your Christian carriage under so great a cross. The hour of affliction is an hour of temptation. Satan loves to fish when the waters are troubled. He would bring us to hard thoughts of God, by the hard things we suffer from God; 'touch him, and he will curse thee to thy face.' In such stormy weather, some vessels are cast away. A corrupt heart in adversity, like water boiling over the fire, then most of all discovereth its froth and filth, Isa. viii. 21. But though frosty seasons are hurtful to weeds, yet they are helpful to good corn. A sanctified person, like a silver bell, the harder he is smitten, the better he soundeth. Faith is a special antidote against the poison of the wicked one. It can read love in the blackest characters of divine dispensation; as by a rainbow we see the beautiful image of the sun's light, in the midst of a dark and waterish cloud. God's rod, like Jonathan's, is dipped in honey. Our daily bread, and our sharpest rod, grow upon the same root. Every believer may say in affliction, as Mauritius, when his wife and children were slain before his eyes, Righteous art thou, O Lord, and in very faithfulness hast afflicted me.

Dear Cousin, since God's rod hath a voice as well as his word, and, like Moses's rod in Egypt, worketh wonders in and for his people, let me beseech you to hear it, and to know him that hath appointed it. Oh how highly doth it behove you to labour, that, as Aaron's rod, it may bud and blossom with the fruits of holiness!

Two lessons principally God would teach you by it:

First, That your affections be taken off from earthly possessions. Dying relations call for dying affections. When Israel doted on Egypt as a palace, God made it an iron furnace to wean them from it, and to make them weary of it. The creature is our idol by nature; we bow down the knees of our souls to it, and worship it; but infinite wisdom makes it our grief, that it may not be our god. When children fare well abroad, they are mindless of home; but when abused by strangers, they hasten to their parents. The world is therefore a purgatory, that it might not be our paradise. As soon as Laban frowned on Jacob, he talks of returning to his father's house. Every rout the world puts us to, sounds a retreat to our affections, and calls off our heart from the eager pursuit of these withering vanities. Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? Prov. xxiii. 5; much less thine heart.

I have read of a young hermit, who, being passionately in love with a young lady, could not by any art suppress the fury and

violence of that flame, till at last, being told that she was dead, and had been buried about fourteen days, he went secretly to her vault, and, with the skirt of his mantle, wiped the moisture from the carcase, and still at the return of his temptation, laid it before him, saying, Behold, this is the beauty of the woman which thou didst so much desire; and the man at last with that moisture of the corpse put out the fire.

The godliness of the world, its whole glory and gallantry, is but a curious picture drawn on ice, which affords no good footing; for whilst we are standing on it, we are sliding from it; and who would lay the stress of his felicity upon so slippery a foundation? No wise man ever put his chiefest goods and riches in such low, damp rooms, where they will corrupt and putrefy.

Hippocrates affirmeth that all immoderations are enemies to the health of the body; sure I am they are to the health of the soul. The amity of the world is enmity against God. All the water is little enough to run in the right channel; therefore none should run beside. The time is short; use the world as not abusing it, 1 Cor. vii. 29.

Secondly, That you choose the good part that shall never be taken from you. Man's heart will be fixed on somewhat as its hope and happiness. God therefore puts out our candles, takes away relations, that we may look up to the Sun, and esteem him our chiefest portion. When we are digging and delving in the earth to find out content and comfort, he sendeth damps, purposely to make us call to be drawn upward. Till the prodigal met with a famine, he regarded not his father. If the waters be abated, the dove is apt to wander and defile herself; but when they cover the face of the earth, and allow her no rest, then she returneth to the ark.

I hope there is a good work begun in you, which shall be finished at the day of Christ. But every one standeth or falleth to their own master. Get Scripture on your side, and you are safe for ever. The Romans, when they parted from the bones of their dead friends, (for they burnt them,) took their leave in such language, *Vale, vale, vale, nos te ordine quo natura permiserit sequemur;* Farewell, farewell, farewell, we shall follow thee in the time and order which nature alloweth us. You may say of your husband, as David of his child, I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me. Prepare therefore for your dying hour.

Labour to be rich in godliness. Grace alone is special bail against death; it is such wealth as will be current in the other world. Lay up your treasure in heaven, where neither thief nor

moth, neither men nor devils, can rob you of it. Take God in Christ for your heaven, and you are happy in spite of the world, death, and hell. You know the living comfort of your dying husband was, that though his flesh and heart failed him, yet God was the strength of his heart and his portion for ever. And it was a memorable speech of his, when some friends came to him and commended the richness and magnificence of Hampton Court, newly trimmed and adorned for the reception of her Majesty, One drop of the blood of Christ is more worth than all the world. I must tell you there is no such cordial in a day of death as this covenant-relation to the Lord of life.

The child may walk in that dark entry without fear if he have but his Father by the hand: 'Though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear none ill, for thou art with me.' Death indeed is strong; it overcometh principalities and powers: but as strong as it is, it cannot separate God and the godly person. It may dissolve the natural union betwixt soul and body, but not the mystical union betwixt God and the soul. The saints die in the Lord, they sleep in Jesus.

O cousin, be married to Christ, and you are made for ever. Heaven is the jointure, and death one of the servants or slaves of her that is the spouse of this Lord. Death is yours, ye are Christ's, 1 Cor. iii. 21. Other men are death's, (it hath dominion over them,) but death is yours—your servant to strip off your rags of sin and misery, and to clothe you with the robes of joy and glory.

The ensuing discourse was, for the substantial part of it, delivered at the funeral of your dearest relation on earth. You gave me the text, and my indisposition of body allowed me then but little time, which caused me now to make some enlargements and additions; but it is the same body, possibly in a little neater, far from gaudy, dress, which was prepared for the pulpit. I present it to you, not doubting of its acceptance, for his sake whose death was the occasion of it. The good Lord bless it to you, requite your love to me and them that fear him, make up the want of streams in the more abundant enjoyment of the fountain, fill you with all the fruits of righteousness, enable you to persevere and increase in godliness, and so to live with a good conscience that you may die with much comfort, and be a follower of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises; so prayeth,

Your servant for Jesus' sake,

George Swinnock.

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

To the Right Worshipful the Mayor, with the Recorder, Jurats, Common Council, and the rest of the inhabitants of his native town, Maidstone, in Kent.

Honoured and Beloved,—It is a general observation, that all creatures have propensity and inclination towards those places where they receive their births and beings. Vegetatives which stand in the lowest rank of life, thrive best, because they delight most, in those grounds whence they first grow. Sensitives, as they have a higher being, so a stronger inclination to those parts where they are born.

The prince of philosophers telleth us that fish usually stay with pleasure in those waters in which they are bred, and beasts in those woods in which they are brought forth, and that neither of them will remove without force and violence; nature hath planted in them both this principle of affecting their native places.[1] Hence it comes to pass that even these creatures have manifested their thankfulness after their manner. Trees acknowledge that sap which they borrow from the earth in which they stand, in the tribute of leaves which they pay back to the same in autumn. The storks are said to leave one of their young in that part of the earth where they are hatched. Men, as they have a nobler life, so a greater love to their native country.[2] Heathen themselves have been famous for this.

Pericles, the Athenian, did so affect his countrymen, that his usual speech was, If none but myself should lead them to the shambles, as much as lieth in me, they shall be immortal.[3] When Cleomenes, king of Sparta, being greatly distressed, had a promise

[1] Arist. Hist. Animal., lib. iv. cap. 8.

[2] Patriam quisque amat, non quia pulchram, sed quia suam.—*Sen.*

[3] Plut. in Vit.

of help from Ptolemy, king of Egypt, upon condition that his mother and son were sent to him as pledges; Cratesiclea, for so was his mother's name, as soon as she understood it, said to her son, who was afraid and ashamed to mention it to her, How is it that thou hast concealed it so long and hast not told me? Come, come, put me straight into a ship and send me whither thou wilt, that this body of mine may do some good unto my country, before crooked age consume it without profit.[1] Themistocles, notwithstanding his countrymen had banished him, drank the blood of a bull, and poisoned himself, to keep Artaxerxes, who had sworn not to go against it without him, from invading his country.[2] Codrus, king of Athens,[3] Attilius Regulus, general of the Romans,[4] and M. Curtius,[5] are renowned in history for sacrificing their lives for their country's liberty.

The Christian is ὁμοιοπαθὴς, a man of like passions, only he acteth from higher principles, and affecteth far holier purposes. Religion doth not break the string of natural affection, but wind it up to such a pitch, as may make its strokes more true, and its sound more melodious. Nehemiah was sad and pensive when the city of his father was solitary, Neh. ii. 3. The Jews were disconsolate when their native country lay desolate, Ps. cxxxvii., beginning. Paul could wish himself parted from Christ, that his kindred and countrymen might be united to Christ, Rom. ix. 3. Greg. Nazianzen and Jerome report that the Jews to this day come yearly to the place where Jerusalem, the city of their fathers stood, which was destroyed by Titus and Adrian, and upon the day of the destruction of it, weep over it.

As it is natural to love, so not unusual in our kingdom for rich persons to manifest their love to their native parishes by large gifts to the poor. But though my respects to you be sincere, yet I may say, in a sense, silver and gold have I none to speak my affections by, only such as I have I give you; a treatise which may, through the blessing of God, help you to the true treasure.

Bucholcerus blessed God that he was born in the days, and bred under the discipline of holy Melanchthon.[6] I must ingenuously acknowledge, that it was a great mercy to me that I was born amongst you, and brought up under as pious and powerful a ministry there, as most in England.[7]

In testimony of my unfeigned love, I present you with this brief discourse, which was conceived in your pulpit, and through the

[1] Plut. in Vit. [2] Diodor. [3] Pez. Mel. Hist. [4] Tul. de Offic.
[5] Livy. [6] Melch. Adam. [7] Mr Thomas Wilson.

importunity of several of you, brought forth to the press. The occasion of it, as is well known to you, was the death of your neighbour, and my dear relation, Master Caleb Swinnock, who was interred May 21, 1662, whose father and grandfather had three or four times enjoyed the highest honour, and exercised the highest office, in your corporation. I am much of his mind, who saith that funeral encomiastics of the dead, are often confections of poison to the living; for many, whose lives speak nothing for them, will draw the example into consequence, and be thereby led into hope that they may press a hackney funeral sermon to carry them to heaven when they die; and therefore am always sparing myself, though I condemn not the custom in others, where they do it with prudence, and upon good cause. My friend's holy carriage in his sickness, besides his inoffensiveness, for aught I ever heard, in his health, commandeth me to hope that his soul is in heaven. I had the happiness some time to be brought up with him in his father's, Mr Robert Swinnock's family, whose house, I cannot but speak it to the glory of God, had holiness to the Lord written upon it. His manner was to pray twice a day by himself, once or twice a day with his wife, and twice a day with his family, besides singing psalms, reading, and expounding Scriptures, which morning and evening were minded. The Sabbath he dedicated wholly to God's service, and did not only himself, but took care that all within his gate should spend the day in secret and private duties, and in attendance on public ordinances; of their proficiency by the last, he would take an account upon their return from the assembly. His house indeed was, as Tremellius saith of Cranmer's, *Palæstra pietatis,* a school of religion. I write this not so much for the honour of him, of whose industry for the good of the souls committed to him I was a frequent eye-witness, and whose memory is blessed; but chiefly for your good, that as some of you do already, so others also may be provoked to follow such gracious patterns. I must tell you, that what low thoughts soever any of you now may have of holy persons, and holy practices, yet when you come to look death in the face, and enter into your unchangeable estates, a little of their grace and godliness will be of more worth in your esteems than the whole world. Though the saint be marked for a fool in the world's calendar at this day, and the prosperous sinner counted the wisest person, yet when the eyes of sinners' bodies are closed, the eyes of their souls will be opened; and then, oh then, they will see and say, according to that apocryphal place which will be found canonical for the matter of it, We fools counted his

life to be madness, and his end to be without honour; but now he is numbered among the children of God, and his lot is among the saints, Wisdom v. 4, 5.

The subject of this tractate is partly the true way to die well; which I am sure is of infinite concernment to your immortal souls, and such a lesson that, if it be not learned, you are lost for ever. The cynic[1] cared not what became of his body when dead; and the other heathen could slight the loss of a grave, a little earth;[2] but without question it concerns you nearly to take care what becomes of your souls, and you cannot so easily bear the loss of God and heaven.

Men, indeed, are generally unwilling to hear of death, and the minister who would urge them to it is as unwelcome as foul weather, which usually comes before it is sent for. Whatsoever hath a tendency to death is killing; the telling them of it sounds as mournfully in their ears as the tolling of a passing bell; and the making their wills, as frightful to them as the making their graves. Hence, when they are riding post in the broad way of sin and the world, and conscience would check and rein them in with the curbs of death and judgment, they presently snap them in pieces, and stifle its convictions; they dare not look into the book of conscience, to see how accounts stand between God and themselves, but, like hawks, are ever hooded within-doors, blind at home, and never use their eyes but abroad, to the hurt and censuring of others.

The Egyptian slaves drank wine freely, and wrapped their heads in veils, that they might die without sight or sorrow.[3] I know many drown the thoughts of their future mourning in carnal pleasure and present mirth; but such mirth, like Nabal's, will last no longer than while they are drunk with ignorance and senselessness; for they no sooner come to themselves, to understand the state they are in, but their hearts die within them. Besides, hereby they put themselves upon a necessity of perishing; for, alas! how will they do to die, who consider not beforehand of their latter end.

Naturalists tell us of a cockatrice, that if men see it first, that dieth; if that seeth a man first, the man dieth. It is most true of death, if we see it first, by a holy preparation for it, we kill it—it cannot hurt us; but if death see and seize us first, it kills us eternally. Oh believe it, sirs, it is another manner of thing to die well

[1] Laert. [2] Facilis jactura sepulchri.

[3] Mori timeat qui ad secundam mortem de hac morte transibit.—*Cypr. de Mortal.*

than the sleepy world dreams of. The lustiest of you all must expect that ere long death will trip up your heels, and give you a fall; ask your souls whether you are ready for it. Will it not prove your downfall? When death throweth you, will it not be your eternal overthrow? It is possible, ye think of preparing for death hereafter, but why not now? Do any of you say, 'To-morrow I will repent'? What if God say, 'Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.' Where are you then? It is one of the greatest stratagems of the devil, whereby he hath undermined millions of souls, by prevailing with them to delay till it was too late. Oh consider, death, like thunder and lightnings, blasteth the green corn, and consumeth the strongest buildings, Job. xxi. 23, 24. One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet: 'His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow.' The cock in the Arabic fable, having overcome another cock in a battle, thought now that he had no enemy, and therefore got to the top of a house, and began to crow and clap his wings in token of triumph. When behold, on a sudden, a vulture cometh and snatcheth away his bragging champion and conqueror.[1] If nature in any of you have mastered one distemper, it gives you not leave to be secure, for an outward accident or inward disease will on a sudden master you.

It is observable in the days of Solomon, when Israel enjoyed the greatest peace, they made strong preparation for war, 1 Kings iv. 25, 26, 'And Israel and Judah dwelt every man under his own vine and fig-tree. And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.'

Iphicrates, the Athenian general, in times of peace intrenched his army, ordered his outworks, set his watch, kept his guards, and observed all martial discipline, as if he had been in the height and heat of war; and being asked the reason by one of his familiars, and what he feared; he answered, To be surprised, and lest it should so fall out that he should be constrained to say, I thought not on it. Oh that we were as wise, who are listed under the captain of our salvation, for that war wherein there is no discharge! Beloved friends, watch therefore, 'for ye know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of man cometh, Mat. xxv. 13.

The Brachmanni had their graves before their doors. The Sybarites at banquets had a death's head delivered from hand to hand by every guest at the table. The emperor Ferdinand had one appointed at certain times to salute him with *Vive memor lethi*,

[1] *Vide* Loeman.

Ferdinande ; O Ferdinand, live as one that is mindful he must die. Joseph of Arimathea had his tomb in his garden. When the blessed Saviour was in his glorious transfiguration, in company with those heavenly courtiers, they spake to him of his decease, Luke ix. 31. Could you think but one quarter of an hour every day, what a searching, trying day, the day of death will be; ah! how holy would you live! how exactly would you walk! Were death at your doors, at your tables, in your gardens, in your shops, present before your eyes in all your projects and pleasures, how would it deaden your hearts to these sublunary vanities, and quicken your affections to celestial felicities!

I have read of one that prayed six times a day, and being asked the reason, said no more but this, I must die. If any argument in the world will dissuade from wickedness, and persuade to godliness, and abounding in the work of the Lord, death will. They who steer the ship aright, sit in the hindermost part of it. They who order their conversations aright, dwell in the thoughts of their dissolutions. When our time is short, we must work the harder.

It is reported of the birds of Norway that they fly faster than the birds of other countries, not because they have greater nimbleness of wing, but by a natural instinct—they knowing the day in their climate to be very short, (not above three hours long, say some)—make the more haste to their nests.[1] Your time is little; your accounts will be great; your work must be done now or never. Oh work the work of him that sent you into the world, 'while it is day, for the night cometh, when no man can work,' John ix. 4.

I am bound to tell you that God hath committed many talents into the hands of several amongst you; ye are higher in place and power; ye have more opportunities than others to serve the interest and honour of Christ, and therefore God expecteth that you should do more for him than others. Indulge the drunkenness, and swearing, and uncleanness, and Sabbath-breaking of others, lest ye should be counted busy-bodies, or precise persons, and you destroy both your own and their souls. There is no such cruelty to men's souls, as clemency to their sins. He loves his friend best, who hates his lusts most. Besides the wrong your sinful compliance doth to others, whilst ye bear the sword—as women wear their artificial teeth for show only, not for service—ye treasure up wrath on your own heads against the day of death; for as a reverend divine, now with God, said truly, Nothing more saddens the heart when one comes to die, than his neglect of those opportunities which God's

[1] Olauf. Mag. Hist. Septentrion.

providence, or his own place, have put into his hand of doing or receiving good. Neither is there a sharper corrosive than the reflection upon those days and times which have passed over him *male, aliud, nihil, agentem.*

It is chronicled of Philip the Third, king of Spain,[1] that though he never committed gross sin all his lifetime, yet when he came to die, he screeched out dreadfully, Oh that I had never reigned! oh that I had never been king! for then I should not have now to answer for my neglect of doing the good I might, and my not hindering the evil I ought in my government. Sirs, I beseech you, give me leave to be faithful to you. Will it not be a dreadful time with you, when you are tumbling on your dying beds, and near your eternity, if conscience should fly in your faces for your falseness and unfaithfulness in your places, and make you cry out, Oh that I had never been mayor of Maidstone! oh that I had never been justice! oh that I had never been jurat! for then I should not have now to answer before the dreadful tribunal of a righteous God, for all the oaths, fornications, profanation of the Lord's day, and other evils which I might have hindered, and did not; and for all the good which I might, by my holy pattern, and encouraging others in piety, have done, and would not. Alas! ye cannot imagine the dreadfulness of such a man's condition on such a day. Therefore now be terrors to evil-doers, and encouragements to them that do well, if ye would find comfort then; for as in philosophy, so in divinity—they who mind not the premises, make but mad, but sad conclusions.

The naturalists assure us, that the ashes of a viper applied to that part of the body which is stung, will draw the venom out of it,—natural attraction, as it were, calling home that poison which injury and violence had misplaced; the serious consideration that you must die, and be turned into dust and ashes, will be a sovereign medicine against the poison and pollution of sin; it will make you both good men and good magistrates.

The latter part of the treatise containeth the gracious person's glorious portion. Therein I have endeavoured so to set forth the vastness of the saints' estate (though, I must confess, neither men nor angels can cast up its total sum) that I might prevail with you to desire the felicity of God's children, and the inheritance of his chosen ones. This is the portion, which is, as the Spanish ambassador said of his master's treasure in the Indies, without a bottom. Though the seven streams of Nilus are known, yet the

[1] Val. Max.

head of it was never found out. Much of the riches, and beauty, and perfections of the ever-blessed God may be read in the book of the creatures; more may be seen in the glass of the Scriptures; but the longest line of human or angelical understanding can never fathom his boundless, bottomless nature and being; yet there is so much to be known of him even in this life, as may draw out your hearts to choose and close with him. The world is ready to wonder what the people of God see or enjoy in him, that they are so fearful of his fury, and so joyful in his favour. As the ignorant wretch could see nothing in the picture of Helena, why Nicostratus should admire it so much, but, as Nicostratus told him, O friend, if thou hadst my eyes, thou wouldst wonder at it as much as I do; so, had the world but the saints' eyes; could they see what a crown of glory, what a paradise of pleasures, what a mine of riches, what a loving, able, and faithful friend God is; could they but behold that beauty and bounty, grace and peace, love and life, which are in the infinite God, they would admire him too; yea, their eyes would affect their hearts, that they could not but love him, and delight in him; but Satan, with his black hand, like swallows' dung, puts out men's eyes, that they, not seeing so great a good, might not desire him.

The Italians have a proverb, He who hath not seen Venice doth not believe; and he who hath not lived there some time, doth not understand what a city it is.[1] This is most true of God: he who hath not, with Moses, seen him that is invisible, doth not believe; and he who never had fellowship with the Father, and Jesus Christ his Son, cannot understand what a vast, all-sufficient, and infinite portion the eternal God is. O friends, did your eyes, with Isaiah, see this Lord of hosts, or with Israel's magistrate, beheld but his back parts; or had you, with Paul, ever been caught up into the third heavens, ye would quickly trample on all the honours, and pleasures, and treasures of this lower world, as toys and trifles, and say, with David, 'Whom have we in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that we desire besides thee.'

I have undertaken briefly, in the ensuing discourse, to shew also the vast difference between the Christian's and the worldling's portion, by which you may understand, that if any one among you could enjoy the wealth of Crœsus, the wisdom and glory of Solomon, the beauty of Absalom, the strength of Samson, the pleasures of Sardanapalus, and to all the long life of Methuselah, yet in the midst of all these, his soul would be as beggarly as the body of Lazarus, and as restless and unsatisfied as the stormy, tempes-

[1] Qui Venetias non vidit, non credit, et qui aliquando ibi non vixit non intelligit.

tuous ocean. No water, say naturalists, will quench the dragon's thirst. No creature can fill the vast desires of a capacious immortal soul. As among all the beasts of the field there was not a meet companion for man—Adam was solitary and alone, notwithstanding their numerous society; so amongst all the creatures of the world there is not a meet portion for the soul—it is poor and beggarly without God, in the midst of all its possessions. Your heads may be solicitous, and your hearts industrious, to heap up creature comforts, and when ye have got what the world can give, ye would be but as hungry men in a room full of stones or chips. That which is unsuitable to the soul's nature, cannot be satisfying to the spirit's desires.

There is a nourishment proper to every animal. Spiders feed on flies, moles on worms; the horse on grass, the lion on flesh. There is also food proper to man's soul, spiritual meat, and spiritual drink; 'My flesh is meat indeed, my blood is drink indeed,' (all other is *cibi et potus tantummodo umbra ;*) this, this is that which, when the soul comes once to feed on it, it is filled, it is satisfied.

Philosophers observe that the matter of the heavens desireth no other form, whereas in all sublunary things it constantly doth, and the reason is, because of the actuality and perfection of that heavenly form. While the soul fasteneth on any sublunary thing as its happiness, it desireth more and better; but when it doth once choose the blessed God, it desireth no more, no better, because of those infinite perfections which are in God. One God answereth all the soul's desire and necessities.

To keep you no longer out of the body of the book, it is recorded of Marcus Cato,[1] that after his return from Carthage, when he did at any time deliver his judgment about any business in the senate, he would conclude his speech with, Methinks Carthage should be destroyed. Sirs, will you suffer me to tell you again and again, Methinks a dying hour is not to be neglected; methinks a living God is worthy to be embraced. Though there may be some differences among you, about things that are ceremonial and circumstantial, yet ye are, I hope, generally agreed,—I am sure all are, that have the least savour of religion—that man's greatest wisdom is to prepare for his dying hour, Deut. xxxii. 29; Ps. xc. 12. That the heart of religion consisteth in taking, not the world, but God, for your portion and happiness, Ps. lxxiii. 25; Mat. xxii. 35; 1 John ii. 15. That profaneness ought to be avoided in yourselves, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10; Gal. v. 19–21, and suppressed according to your places and powers in others, Rev. ii. 2; 2 Chron. xv. 16; Ps. ci.

[1] Plut. in Vit.

7; 1 Tim. v. 22. That the power of godliness ought chiefly to be minded and countenanced, 1 Tim. iv. 8; 2 Tim. iii. 5; John iv. 24. That a holy, spiritual, not a fleshly, sensual life, is the way to heaven, Rom. viii. 5, 13. That your children and servants ought to be instructed in the knowledge of God and Christ, of their misery and the means of their recovery, Gen. xviii. 19; Prov. xxii. 6; Eph. vi. 4. That your houses should be churches, praying, reading, and singing families, Joshua xxiv. 15; Ps. ci. 2, 6, 7; Col. iii. 16; Rom. xvi. 5; Jer. x. 25. And that the Lord's day should be conscientiously observed, and devoted to the dearest Redeemer by secret, private, and public duties, Exod. xx. 8; Is. lviii. 13; Acts xx. 7; Rev. i. 10. These things are written, as with the beams of the sun, so clearly in the Scriptures, that if ye deny them, ye deny yourselves to be Christians, and profess yourselves to be infidels; I beseech you, therefore, in the name of the blessed Saviour, who redeemed you from your vain conversations with his own most precious blood, and for the sake of your immortal souls, which within a few days must throw their last cast for eternity, that your practices be answerable to such principles. For, believe me, it will be a dreadful thing another day, for your lives to give your consciences the lie at this day.

I have but one request more to you—pardon my freedom and plainness of speech, for truly my heart is enlarged towards you—be pleased to peruse the following discourse, with serious consideration of the truth and weight of the particulars therein delivered, and with supplication to God that the treatise may be serviceable to your eternal salvations. If I write not what is agreeable to the word of God, reject it; but if I do, submit to it, lest ye subvert your own souls. The Father of mercies and God of all grace enlighten all your minds in the saving knowledge of himself; and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent, bless this brief discourse to you, infuse grace in every of you where it is wanting, increase grace where it is; bless you so in civil things that your town may be a habitation of justice, and so succeed you in spirituals, that it may be a mountain of holiness; and enable you all so to prepare for death, that it may be to you the gate of life; so to take him for your portion, that he may be your everlasting possession; and so to glorify him in your generations, that ye may be meet for, and heirs of, the eternal weight of glory; which is the prayer of

Your most affectionate servant,

George Swinnock.

THE FADING OF THE FLESH.

My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.—Ps. lxxiii. 26.

CHAPTER I.

The preface, division of the psalm, and coherence of the text.

The Holy Scriptures are famous above all other writings for their verity. The works and books of men are like their bodies, liable to many weaknesses. After their most correct edition, there may frequently be found more errata in the copy than in the press. But the word of God is like himself, full, without all imperfection; and faithful, without all falsehood or corruption. Its author is the God of truth, for whom it is impossible to lie, and therefore its matter must needs be the word of truth. Thy law is the truth, 2 Pet. i. 21; Titus i. 2; Ps. cxix. 142.

Among all the books of Scripture, the Psalms of David are famous for variety. Other books are either historical, doctrinal, or prophetical; the book of Psalms is all, Ps. xxii. and xvi. It describeth some histories of the church, foretelleth the passion and resurrection of Christ, and declareth the duty of a Christian. The Psalms, saith Gerrhard,[1] are a jewel made up of the gold of doctrine, of the pearl of comfort, and of the gems of prayer. Basil saith,[2] It is a common shop of remedies, a compendium of all divinity, a storehouse of excellent doctrine for all persons and in all conditions.

[1] Jo. Gerr. Loc. Com. de Script. in Exegesi.

[2] Basil in Psal.

In this seventy-third Psalm we may consider,

1. The title to it.

2. The substance of it.

Its title is, A Psalm of Asaph,[1] or a Psalm for Asaph, saith Ainsworth. The original bearing both, causeth some difference among expositors whether Asaph were the penman of it, or only the musician to whom it was directed to be set and sung with the voice or instrument. That Asaph was a prophet or seer is plain, 2 Chron. xxix. 30; as also that he was a singer, 1 Chron. xv. 19. Mollerus thinketh Asaph the compiler of it; Calvin judgeth David. The matter is not much; for whosoever of the two were the pen, the Spirit of God, which is called the finger of God, guided it, and wrote the psalm.

For the substance of the psalm, it containeth the godly man's trial in the former part of it, and his triumph in the latter part of it. We have,

First, The grievous conflict between the flesh and the Spirit, to the 15th verse.

Secondly, The glorious conquest of the Spirit over the flesh, to the end.

In the beginning of the psalm he ingeniously pointeth at those rocks against which he was like to have split his soul.

In the middle he candidly confesseth his ignorance and folly to have been the chiefest foundation of his fault.

In the conclusion, he gratefully kisseth that hand which led him out of the labyrinth.

Or we may observe,

First, The cause of his distemper.

Secondly, The cure of it.

Thirdly, The psalmist's carriage after it.

His disease was envy. The psalmist was much troubled with the frets: 'I was envious at the foolish,' ver. 3.

First, The cause of it: 'When I saw the prosperity of the wicked,' ver. 3. His heart was pained because profane men prospered. That weeds which cumbered the ground should be watered so plentifully, and grow so exceedingly, when good corn was so thin

[1] Le Asaph, *i.e.*, Asaphi vel Asapho, cum *le* inservit tum genitivo tum dativo.—*A Lap.* Existimant nonnulli Psalmum hunc et cæteros qui sequuntur a Davide compositum. De ea re quanquam non disputo, tamen genus orationis in his Psalmis tale est ut apparent alium esse carminum horum authorem quam Davidem.—*Moller. in Tit. Psal.* lxxiii. De Psalmi authore non anxie disputo; mihi verisimile est, quia canend provincia mandata fuerit ipsi Asapho, nomen ejus poni, præterito Davidis nomine sicuti res per se notæ sæpe taceri solent.—*Calvin in loc.*

and lean; that the lion and raven, those unclean creatures, should be spared, when the innocent lamb and dove were sacrificed; that the wicked should flourish like the bay-tree, enjoy a constant spring and summer, be fresh and green all the year, though without fruit, when saints, like good apple-trees, had their autumn and winter; this touched the good man to the quick; his sore eyes could not behold the glorious sunshine of their prosperity without much pain.

The heathen have, from the flourishing of such unholy persons flatly denied all providence. Diogenes the cynic, seeing Harpalus, a vicious fellow, increasing in wealth, whilst he wallowed in wickedness, said that the gods took no care how things were carried here below. The Athenians, upon the defeat and death of their honest general, Nicias, in Sicily, concluded that the divine powers were wholly regardless of human affairs. And not only these blind heathen who walked in the night of darkness, but even saints themselves, who were able to see afar off, and who pondered the paths of their feet, have stumbled at this stone, Jer. xii. 1, 2; Hab. i. 13.

Secondly, The cure of his distemper. His disease was bad eyes. An envious eye is an evil eye: 'Why is thine eye evil, because mine is good,' Mat. xx. 15. His remedy was this: his eyes were anointed with some eye-salve out of the sanctuary, which helped them. He saw the end of wicked men's prosperity to be no less than endless misery; that they did but like malefactors go up the ladder above others to be turned off and executed; and this satisfied him.

The heathen, as they ascribe the subject of the disease to many causes; some naturalists to the principles of generation and corruption; the stoics to the necessary connexion of second causes; the astrologers to the motion and influence of the stars, undertaking to shew us the very houses of prosperity and adversity; the wiser sort of those pagans,—though also their foolish hearts were darkened,—to the will of Jupiter, who had his vessels of good and bad things by him, out of which he gave to all persons according to his pleasure; so also they prescribe for its removal many cures, though generally their medicines, like weak lenitives, did only move and stir, not remove or purge away the distemper. Their receipts were all of kitchen physic, such as grew in nature's garden, when those drugs which do work the cure must be fetched from far. I confess the master of moral philosophy, whom I most admire of all heathen, seemeth to harp upon the same string with the psalmist. Those, saith he,

whom God approveth and loveth, he exerciseth and afflicteth; those whom he seemeth to spare, he reserveth for future sufferings.[1] But an ordinary capacity may perceive by the treatise, though there be many excellent things in it, how far the moralist came short of Christianity. It is also without question that his sight was not so good as to look into the other world, and there to see the eternal pains of the evil, and pleasures of the good, which vision did allay the storm in the prophet's spirit. He tells us, indeed, that vicious persons are not dismissed, only their punishment is delayed; but to him this life was the time, and this world the place, of their execution.

That which did assuage those boisterous waves, which threatened to swallow up the soul of the psalmist, was the different conclusion of the saint's and sinner's conversations. By faith he foresaw that the whole life of a wicked man was but a tragedy: though its beginning might be cheerful, yet its ending would be mournful; though their power were great on earth for a time, yet their portion should be in the lowest hell to eternity. 'Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they were utterly consumed with terrors,' ver. 17-19. They are but exalted, as the shell-fish by the eagle, according to the naturalists, to be thrown down on some rock and devoured. Their most glorious prosperity is but like a rainbow, which sheweth itself for a little time in all its gaudy colours, and then vanisheth. The Turks, considering the unhappy end of their viziers, use this proverb, He that is in the greatest office, is but a statue of glass. Wicked men walk on glass or ice, 'thou hast set them in slippery places;' on a sudden their feet slip—they fall, and break their necks. Oh the sad reckoning which they must have after all their merry meetings! Though their sweet morsels go down pleasantly here, yet they will rise in their stomachs hereafter.

The holy prophet saw also that saints, after their short storm, should enjoy an everlasting calm. 'Thou shalt guide me by thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory,' ver. 24. As the pillar of fire by night, and cloud by day, thou wilt march before, and

[1] Hos Deus quos probat, quos amat indurat, recognoscit, exercet. Eos autem quibus indulgere videtur, quibus parcere, venturis malis servat. Erratis enim si quem judicatis exceptum. Veniet ad illum diu felicem sua portio; quisquis videtur dimissus esse, dilatus est.—*Seneca in lib. Quare bonis viris mala accidant, cum sit providentia.*—Cap. 14.

direct me through the wilderness of this world, till I come to Canaan.

Thirdly, His carriage after it.

1. In a holy apostrophe or conversion to God: 'Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none on earth that I desire besides thee.' What though ungodly persons abound in sensual pleasures, yet I have infinitely the better portion. They have the streams, which run pleasantly for a season, but will shortly be scorched up; but I have the fountain, which runneth over, and runneth ever. If they, like grasshoppers skipping up and down on earth, have their notes, what tune may I sing who am mounting up to heaven, and enjoy him who is unspeakably more desirable than anything, yea, than all things, either in heaven or earth!

CHAPTER II.

The interpretation of the text, and the doctrine, that man's flesh will fail him.

In a heavenly position, concerning his happiness in God: 'My flesh and my heart faileth me: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.'

In reference to which I shall,

First, Open the terms.

Secondly, Divide the text.

Thirdly, Raise the doctrinal truths.

'My flesh and my heart faileth me.' Some take the words in a spiritual, others in a civil, others in a natural, sense. Amongst them who take it in a spiritual sense, some expositors take it in an evil, others in a good sense.

They who take the expression in a bad sense,[1] take it to be a confession of his former sin, and to have relation to the combat, mentioned in the beginning of the psalm, between the flesh and the Spirit, as if he said, I was so surfeited with self-conceitedness that I presumed to arraign divine actions at the bar of human reason, and to judge the stick under water crooked by the eye of my sense, when indeed it was straight; but now I see that flesh is no fit judge in matters of faith; that neither my flesh nor heart can determine rightly of God's dispensations, nor hold out uprightly under Satan's temptations; for if God had not supported me, my flesh had utterly supplanted me: 'My flesh and my heart faileth

[1] Abbot *in loc.*

me: but God is the strength of my heart.' Flesh is sometime taken for corrupt nature, Gal. v. 13. First, Because it is propagated by the flesh, John iii. 6; secondly, Because it is executed by the flesh, Rom. vii. 25; thirdly, Because corruption is nourished, strengthened, and increased by the flesh, 1 John ii. 16.

They who take the words in a good sense, do not make them look back so far as to the beginning of the psalm, but only to the neighbour verse. The prophet, say they, having passionately fixed his heart on God, as the most amiable object in heaven and earth, (ver. 25,) was transported therewith so excessively, and carried out in holy sallies after him so vehemently, that he was ready to sink and swoon away; his spirits were ready to expire through the exuberancy of his love to, and longings after, the blesssd God. The weak cask of his body was ready to break, and not able to hold that strong and spiritual wine. 'My flesh and my heart faileth me.' I am so ravished with delight in, and so enlarged in desires after, this infinitely beautiful object, that there is no more spirit in me. I am sick; yea, if God should not appear, the strength of my heart should die for love.

2. They who expound the words in a civil sense, as I may say, affirm the sentence to refer to the psalmist's sufferings.

He had a good rod instead of a good piece of bread for his breakfast every morning, and the table was covered with sackcloth, and furnished with the same bitter herbs both at dinner and supper. 'For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning,' ver. 14. Now the weight of this burden was so great, pressing his body, and oppressing his mind, that without an almighty power, it had broke his back; his flesh and his heart failed him.[1]

3. Others take the words in a natural sense, as if the prophet did neither intend by them his fault, as some who take them in a spiritual sense; nor his fear, as those who take them in a civil sense;[2] but only his frailty, as if he had said, My moisture consumeth, my strength abateth, my flesh falleth, my heart faileth, or at least, ere long, my breath will be corrupt, my days extinct, and the grave ready for me. How happy am I therefore in having God for the strength of my heart! Ainsworth reads the words, Wholly consumed is my heart and my flesh.[3]

I shall take the words in this sense, as being most suitable to this occasion.

[1] Nam quicquid adversi accidit, aut carni accidit aut animo.—*Muscul. in loc.*

[2] Sunt quibus præsens tempus placet, aliis futurum magis arridet.—*Marl. in loc.*

[3] Deficit (consumitur) caro mea et cor meum.—*Mollerus.*

So far the thesis, now to the antithesis.

'But God is the strength of my heart.'[1] Though my flesh fail me, the Father of spirits doth not fail me; when I am sinking, he will put under his everlasting arm to save me.

The Seventy read it, But God is the god of my heart, because God is all strength—God in the heart is the strength of the heart.

The Hebrew carrieth it, But God is the rock of my heart,[2] *i.e.*, A sure, strong, and immoveable foundation to build upon. Though the winds may blow, and the waves beat, when the storm of death cometh, yet I need not fear that the house of my heart will fall, for it is built on a sure foundation: God is the rock of my heart The strongest child that God hath is not able to stand alone; like the hop or ivy, he must have somewhat to support him, or he is presently on the ground. Of all seasons, the Christian hath most need of succour at his dying hour; then he must take his leave of all his comforts on earth, and then he shall be sure of the sharpest conflicts from hell, and therefore it is impossible he should hold out without extraordinary help from heaven. But the psalmist had armour of proof ready wherewith to encounter his last enemy. As weak and fearful a child as he was, he durst venture a walk in the dark entry of death, having his Father by the hand: 'Though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear none ill, for thou art with me,' Ps. xxiii. Though at the troubles of my life, and my trial at death, my heart is ready to fail me, yet I have a strong cordial which will cheer me in my saddest condition: 'God is the strength of my heart.'

'And my portion.' It is a metaphor taken from the ancient custom among the Jews, of dividing inheritances, whereby every one had his allotted portion; as if he had said, God is not only my rock to defend me from those tempests which assault me, and thereby my freedom from evil, but he is also my portion, to supply my necessities, and to give me the fruition of all good. Others, indeed, have their parts on this side the land of promise, but the author of all portions is the matter of my portion. My portion doth not lie in the rubbish and lumber, as theirs doth whose portion is in this life, be they never so large; but my portion containeth him whom the heavens, and heaven of heavens, can never contain. God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever; not for a year, or an age, or a million of ages, but for eternity. Though others' portions, like roses, the fuller they blow, the sooner they shed; they are worsted often by their pride, and wasted through their prodigality,

[1] Robur cordis.—*Calv.* [2] Petra cordis.—*Moller.*

that at last they come to want—and surely death always rends their persons and portions asunder; yet my portion will be ever full, without diminution. And, first, without alteration, this God will be my God for ever and ever, my guide and aid unto death; nay, death, which dissolveth so many bonds, and untieth such close knots, shall never part me and my portion, but give me a perfect and everlasting possession of it.[1]

The words branch themselves into these two parts:

First, The psalmist's complaint: 'My flesh and my heart faileth me.'

Secondly, His comfort: 'But God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.'

Or we may take notice in them,

1. Of the frailty of his flesh: 'My flesh and my heart faileth me.'

2. Of the flourishing of his faith: 'But God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.'

According to the two parts of the text, I shall draw forth two doctrinal truths.

Doct. 1. That man's flesh will fail him.

The highest, the holiest man's heart will not ever hold out. The prophet was great and gracious, yet his flesh failed him.

Doct. 2. That it is the comfort of a Christian, in his saddest condition, that God is his portion.

This was the strong water which kept the psalmist from fainting when his flesh and heart failed him.

I begin with the first:

That man's flesh will fail him. Those whose spirits are noble, will find their flesh but brittle. The psalmist was great, yet death made little, yea, nothing of him. Like the Duke of Parma's sword, it makes no difference between great and small. This cannon hits the great commanders as well as the common soldiers. Like a violent wind, it plucks up by the roots, not only low trees, but also tall cedars. They who lie in beds of ivory, must lie down in beds of earth. Some letters are set out very gaudily with large flourishes, but they are but ink as the other. Some men have great titles,—worshipful, right worshipful, honourable, right honourable,—but they signify no more with death than other men; they are but moving earth, and dying dust, as ordinary men are. Worship, honour, excellency, highness, majesty, must all do homage to the sceptre of this king of terrors. When Constantius entered in

[1] Quicquid præter Deum possideas, non poteris dicere quod pars tua sit futura in seculum. De Deo solo dicit fidelis, Pars mea Deus in seculum.—*Muscul. in loc.*

triumph unto Rome, and had a long time stood admiring the gates, arches, turrets, temples, theatres, and other magnificent edifices of the city, at last he asked Hormisda what he thought of the place. I take no pleasure in it at all, saith Hormisda, for I see the end of this city will be the same with all her predecessors. What he spake of places, is as true of persons; though men may admire them for a while, yet the stateliest and most curious buildings of their bodies will fall to the ground as their ancestors' have done before them, Job iii. 15. This storm will beat on the prince's court as much as on the peasant's cottage. 'What man is he that liveth and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? Selah.' Ps. lxxxix. 48. The interrogation is a strong negation. The prophet challengeth the whole world to find out a person that can procure a protection against death's arrest.

The psalmist was gracious, yet grace gave way to nature. Death will, like hail and rain, fall on the best gardens, as well as the wide wilderness. The wheat is cut down and carried into the barn as well as the tares. A godly man is free from the sting, but not from the stroke, from the curse, but not from the cross, of death. Holy Hezekiah could beg his own life for a few years, but could not compound for his death; he did obtain a reprieve for fifteen years, but not a pardon. The best fruit will perish, because it is worm-eaten. The gold and the dross (the good and the bad) go both into this fire; the former to be refined, the latter to be consumed. The whole world is a charnel-house, and the several inhabitants thereof so many walking carcases. 'The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass,' Isa. xl. 6, 7. The word speaks man's mortality. He is grass, withering grass—a flower, a fading flower. Secondly, Its certainty. 'The voice said, Cry.' The prophet had a charge in a vision given him, to proclaim so much from God to his people. 'Surely the people is grass.' Thirdly, The universality; the flesh of kings and counsellors, the flesh of saints and martyrs, the flesh of high and low, rich and poor—'All flesh is grass.' Man is sometimes compared to the flower for its beauty, but here for its frailty. A flower will quickly fade; if it be not cut down by an instrument of iron, nor cropped by the hand, yet the gentle breath of wind quickly bloweth off its beauty. Besides, an expositor observeth, it is to the flower of the field, not of the garden. Flowers of the garden have more shelter,

and are better looked to, than flowers of the field; these are more open to hard weather, and more liable to be plucked up or trod down. Naturalists tell us of a flower called ephemeron, because it lasteth but a day.[1] Man is such a flower; his life is but a day, whether longer or shorter—a summer or a winter's day. How quickly do the shadows of the evening stretch themselves upon him, and make it night with him! Pliny speaks of a golden vine, which never withereth. The bodies of saints shall be such hereafter, but at present the best herbs wither as well as the worst weeds. Neither the dignity of a prince, nor the piety of a prophet, can excuse from entering the list with this enemy. Against this arrest there is no bail.

CHAPTER III.

The reasons of the doctrine, Man's corruptibility, God's fidelity, and man's apostasy from God.

I shall only lay down, in the explication of the point, two or three reasons, and then proceed to that which will be practical.

The first ground of the doctrine is the corruptibility of man's body. It is called in Scripture a house of clay, Job iv. 18; and an earthly tabernacle, 2 Cor. v. 1. The body of man at best is but a clod of clay, curiously moulded and made up. The Greek proverb hath a truth in it, *Κέραμος ὁ ἄνθρωπος*, Man is but an earthen vessel. Some indeed are more painted than others in regard of dignity and place; others are stronger vessels than the rest in regard of purity of constitution; but all are earthen. 'Surely every man at his best estate is altogether vanity,'[2] Ps. xxxix. All *Adam* is all *Abel*. Man, nay, every man, when most high in regard of his hopes, and most firm in regard of his foundation, is even then the next door to, and but one remove from, corruption. What the great apostle said in a proper, every one may say in a common sense, I die daily. We carry our bane every moment about us. The very food which preserveth our lives, leaves that behind it which will force our deaths. It is holden for certain, saith one,[3] that in two years space there are in the body of man as many ill-humours engendered as a vessel of a hundred ounces will contain. Against some, these enemies appear

[1] *Ἄνθρωποι ἐφήμεροι.—Plut. ad Apol.*

[2] Profecto omnimoda vanitas.—*Jun.*

[3] The Netherland Cure.

in the open field, often skirmishing with them; but against all others they lie in ambush, and wait for an opportunity to fall on and destroy them.[1] In the best timbered body they are but like fire raked under the ashes, and reserved to another day, when they will flame out, and burn it down. We are all, like the apples of Sodom, *quæ contacta cinerescunt*, which, being touched, crumble into dust; or as the spawn of locusts, which, being handled, dissolveth, according to the philosopher.[2] God needs not bring out his great artillery to batter down the building of man's body; a small touch will tumble it down, nay, it is every moment decaying, and will at last fall of itself.[3] There is rottenness at the core of the fairest fruits. Our flesh is no match for the Father of spirits. An ordinary besom will sweep down the spider's web; though it hath accurate weavings and much curiosity, yet it hath no stability. As it was with the gourd of Jonah, so it is with the children of men, we breed and feed those worms which will devour and destroy us. Every man's passing bell hangs in his own steeple.

The second reason is, God's fidelity. The righteous and gracious God hath threatened eternal pains to the wicked as the wages of their sins, and hath promised endless pleasures to the godly, as the reward of Christ's sufferings. Now the place of payment where these threatenings and promises shall be accomplished, is the other world, to which death is the passage. Man dieth, that God's word may live, and falleth to the earth, that God's truth may stand.

Sin, though it be finite in regard of the subject, as being the act of a limited creature, yet it is infinite in regard of the object, as being committed against a boundless Creator; therefore it is punished with the absence of all good, which is an infinite loss; and the presence of all evil, which is infinite in duration, though not in intension, because of the incapability of the sinner.[4] The infernal pit is the place of those punishments, into which, by the ladder of death men descend, Mat. vii. 23, and xxv. 41; Mark ix. 49. Death is but the sinner's trap-door into hell. The English

[1] Tertul. Apol. cap 40.

[2] Arist. Hist. Animal.

[3] Ipsa suis augmentis vita ad detrimenta impellitur, et inde deficit unde proficere creditur.—*Greg.*

[4] In peccato duo sunt; Quorum unum est aversio ab immutabili bono, quod est infinitum, unde ex hac parte peccatum est infinitum. Aliud quod est in peccato est inordinata conversio ad mutabile bonum, et ex hac parte peccatum est finitum. Ex parte aversionis respondet peccato pœna damni, quæ enim est infinita. Est enim amissio infiniti boni, solicet Dei. Ex parte conversionis respondet pœna sensus.—*Aquin.*, 1, 2, ques. 87, Art. 4.

capital malefactors, when cast, are carried into a dungeon, and from thence to the gallows. Ungodly men being cast by the law of God, and not suing out their pardon from the gospel, which is an office set up for that purpose, do go through the dungeon of death to the place of their dreadful and everlasting execution.

God hath also engaged to bestow on the members of Christ an incomparable and unchangeable crown. It is your Father's pleasure to give you a kingdom; but death is the young prophet that anointeth them to it, and giveth them actual possession of it. They must put off their rags of mortality, that they may put on their robes of glory. It is in the night of death that saints go to their blessed and eternal rest. The corn must first die before it can spring up fresh and green: Israel must die in Egypt before he can be carried into Canaan. There is no entrance into paradise but under the flaming sword of this angel death, that standeth at the gate. The soul must be delivered out of the prison of the body, that it may enjoy the glorious liberty of the sons of God. This bird of paradise will never sing merrily, nor warble out the praises of its Maker in a perfect manner, till it be freed from this cage.

The sinner dieth, that, according to God's word, he might receive the bitter fruits of his evil ways. Death is to him as the gate through which condemned and piacular persons pass to their deserved destruction. The saint dieth, that, according to God's promise, he may enjoy the purchased possession. Death to him is as the dirty lane through which Chrysostom passed to a feast—a dark short way through which he goeth to the marriage supper of the Lamb. His body is mortal, that his sins and sufferings might not be immortal.

The third ground of the point may be man's apostasy from God. Death broke in upon man, by reason of man's breaking the commands of God. We had never fallen to dust, if we had not fallen from our duties. Sickness had never seized on our bodies, if sin had not first seized on our souls.

The Pelagians and Socinians say that death is not a consequent of sin, but a condition of nature.[1] The blasphemous Jews tell us that Adam and his posterity were therefore condemned to die, because there was one to come out of his loins who would make himself a God, meaning Christ; but the God of truth hath resolved the genealogy of death into another cause, even the first Adam's aspiring to be like God, and ambition to cut off the entail, and hold only from himself, Gen. iii. 15; Rom. v. 12. As a lethargy in the

[1] Mors est conditio naturæ, non peccati argumentum vel pœna.—*Sen. Suas.*, 7.

head diffuseth universal malignity through the whole body, and thereby corrupteth and destroyeth it ; the apple which Adam did eat was poisoned, which entered into his bowels and being; the venom of it is transmitted all along, like Gehazi's leprosy, to his seed.[1] Some tell us that he would often turn his face toward the garden of Eden and weep, reflecting upon what he had done. Sure I am it was not without cause, for we all got the infection from him, and by him it is that the whole world is tainted and turned into a pest-house. Whatsoever delight he had in the act, there was death in the end.

It seemeth unquestionable that man in his estate of innocency had a conditional, though not an absolute immortality.[2] It is true, he was mortal, *ratione corporis*, being a compound of corruptible elements; but immortal, *ratione fœderis*, being free from the law of death by virtue of the covenant. As before he fell he had a *posse non peccare*, a possibility not to have sinned, but since, a *non posse non peccare*, a necessity of sinning; so in his estate of purity he had a possibility of not dying, but in his estate of apostasy, a necessity of it. If he had stood, he should, like Enoch, have been translated that he should not see death ; he should have entered into his Father's house, but not have walked thither through the dark entry of death.

The flesh faileth us, because sin hath defiled it. Man's flesh at first was fly-blown with pride, and is ever since liable to putrefaction, Ps. xc. 7; Rom. viii. Sin is therefore called a body of death, because it causeth the death of the body. When one asked who set up the stately edifices in Rome, it was answered, The sins of Germany, meaning the money which the pope's agents received for pardons granted to the Germans. If it be demanded, Who pulleth down the goodly building of man's body? it may be answered, The sins of man. It is sin which turneth such costly, curious houses into confused, ruinous heaps. Draco the lawgiver appointed death the punishment of every offence, for which cause his laws are said to be written in blood; and being demanded the reason, he gave this answer, That though, when crimes were unequal, he seemed to be unjust in making all equal in punishment, yet herein his justice appeared, that the least breach of the law deserved death. The light of nature taught them that those that sin are worthy to die, Rom. i. 23. The estate of all sinners lieth in the

[1] Ideo factum est per peccatum non mortale, quod erat; sed mortuum, quod non fieret nisi peccaret.—*Lumb. Sent.*, lib. ii. dist. 19.

[2] *Vide* Vossium Disputat. Theol. de Peccat. pr. hom, quæst. 3. p. 43.

valley of the shadow of death. Wheresoever sin hath but a finger, death will have a hand. Sin, though never committed, but only imputed, did put to death the very Lord of life. It is like that wild caprificus, which, if it get but rooting, though in the substance of a stone in the wall, it will break it asunder.

CHAPTER IV.

First use, Discovering the folly of them that mind the flesh chiefly.

Having laid down these reasons in the doctrinal part of my discourse, I shall now speak to that which is practical. The truth may be useful, both by way of information and exhortation.

First, By way of information. If our flesh will fail us; what fools are they whose whole contrivance is to feed and please the flesh. We laugh at the vanity and folly of children, when we see them very busy and taking much pains to make up a house of cards, or pies of dirt. The greatest part of men are but children of larger dimensions, and are indeed more foolish, because they ought to be more wise. What is their main work, but to make provision for the flesh? to provide fuel enough for the fire of its covetousness, and pleasant water enough for the leviathan of its voluptuousness, and air enough for the chameleon of ambition; as if God had no other design in sending them into the world, but that they might be cooks to dress their bodies as well as possibly might be for the worms. All their care is, What shall we eat? and what shall we drink? and wherewith shall we be clothed? and how shall we do to live in these dear and hard times? As vermin in dunghills, they live and feed on such filth, never once asking their souls in earnest, What wilt thou do for the bread which came down from heaven, and how wilt thou do to put on the robes of Christ's righteousness, that thy nakedness may not appear to thy shame, and oh, what wilt thou do to be saved, to live eternally? These things are not in all their thoughts. Like flies, they are overcome with the spirits of wine, and nourished with froth. It is enough, they think, if, when they come to die, they bequeath their souls to God in their wills,—though it is a thousand to one if those wills be proved in heaven; I can tell them of unanswerable caveats, which the judge's Son will put in against them,—and therefore their whole lives must be devoted to the service of their bodies. Like dying men, they smell of earth, and carry its complexion in their very countenances. If a

man that had two houses in his possession, one whereof was his own freehold for ever, and the other his landlord's, which he agreed to leave at an hour's warning, should neglect his own house, let all things there run to wrack and ruin, but night and day be mending and adorning his landlord's house, as if he could never be at cost enough, or make it neat enough, would not every one condemn this man for a fool or a madman? Truly this is the very case of most men. The soul in the body is a tenant in *domo aliena*, saith the orator.[1] The body is our house of clay, in which we are tenants at another's will; we may be turned out of its doors without so much as an hour's warning. The soul is our own everlasting possession, yet generally the immortal spirit is slighted, no time taken for a serious view of its wants, no cost laid out for its supply, as if it were an indifferent thing whether it swim or sink for ever, when men are always plotting and studying to gratify and please their fading flesh. Oh this is one of the dolefullest sights which eyes can behold, the servant to ride on horseback, and the prince to go on foot; the sensitive appetite to be the grave of religion, and the dungeon of reason. It is reported of a certain philosopher,[2] that dying he bequeathed a great sum of money to him that should be found most foolish. His executor, in pursuance of his will, travelled up and down to find out one that excelled others in folly, and so might challenge the legacy. At last he came to Rome, where a consul abusing his office was adjudged to death, and another, sueing for the place, chosen, who cheerfully took it upon him. To this man he delivered the money, telling him, That he was the most foolish man in the world, who, seeing the miserable end of his predecessor, was nothing therewith discouraged, but joyfully succeeded him in his office. How much do most titular Christians resemble this foolish consul; they see in the world their sensual companions, like sheep, as they are feeding in their fleshly pastures, culled out by death, and called away from them; nay, they may see in the word, if they will believe God himself, the block on which they are laid by that bloody butcher Satan, the knife with which they are stuck, and which he runs up to the very haft in the throat of their precious souls; the heavy curse of the law, and the infinite wrath of the Lord, which they must undergo for ever, and yet they are therewith not the least affrighted, but merrily follow them to the place of endless mourning.

Reader, if thou art one of these fleshpots of Egypt, what folly and madness art thou guilty of. Is not thy spirit *οὐρανιον φὺτον*,[3]

[1] Cicero, Tusc. [2] Greg. de la Nuz. Tract. Evan. [3] Plato.

a heavenly plant, the immediate workmanship of the glorious God, and thy flesh, like the first Adam, of the earth earthy, and art thou not a fool to prefer dirt before that which is divine? Is not thy spirit the impress and image of God himself, in its immortality, noble faculties, and capacity of honouring and enjoying his infinite majesty? and thy body the resemblance of beasts, nay, in many things inferior to them, and art thou not unwise in esteeming that which is brutish above that which is the picture of God's own perfections? Again, is not the wellbeing of thy body involved in the welfare of thy soul? As really as the branches depend on the root for its flourishing, thy body dependeth on thy soul for its salvation. How mad art thou, therefore, to let the vessel sink, and yet presume to preserve the passenger that saileth in it! Once more, shall not the life of thy spirit run parallel with the life of God himself, and the line of eternity? and hath not God himself told thee that thy flesh will fail thee? Dost thou not find it now and then tottering, and, as it were, telling thee that it must drop down; and art not thou a fool in grain, a fool in the highest degree, to place all thy happiness for ever, to set all thy stress and weight for thine unchangeable estate, on this rotten bough, which will certainly break under thee, when thou mightst have sure footing, and lay up a good foundation, by a hearty regarding thine heaven-born soul. Oh consider it, and give conscience leave to call thee fool once, that thou mayest be wise for ever. Attilus, king of Swethland, made a dog king of the Danes, in revenge of some injuries received from them. What wrong hath thy soul done thee, that to be revenged on it, and to spite it to purpose, thou makest its slave its sovereign, that part by which thou art kin to the beasts, its lord and king?

The truth is, were not men drowned in sensuality, as he whom Seneca speaketh of, that knew not whether he stood or sat, till his slave told him, and their consciences seared and made senseless by them, as young gallants, being arrested for debt, make the sergeants drunk, and thereby escape at present, it would be impossible for men to live thus after the flesh. But as some cunning thieves, if there be a mastiff belonging to the house which they intend to rob, give it some morsels which will keep it from barking, that so they may steal the inhabitant's wealth, and they not have the least warning either to hinder or recover it; so the devil hath an art to make men's consciences dumb, whilst he robs them of their inestimable souls. Poor foolish creatures, they are lazing on their beds of carnal security, and delighting themselves in their dreams of

lying vanities, and in the interim he rifleth their houses, and taketh away all that is of any value. Yet, as fast as conscience is now asleep, it will shortly awake, as the jailer at midnight, and then what fears and frights will possess them! Ah, how clearly will they see their folly, in sowing to the flesh, and trusting to that which was never true to any! Then they will roar out, If we had served our spirits as faithfully as we have served our flesh, they would not have failed us thus.

When Pausanias desired Simonides to give him some grave apophthegm, by which he might apprehend his great wisdom, for which he was so renowned, Simonides smiling, spake this, *Esse te hominem, ne excideret tibi;* Remember that thou art a man, that your flesh will fail you. Pausanias puffs at this, but in a short time after, being almost pined to death with famine, he began to think of Simonides' saying, and cried out, *O Simonides, magnum quiddam erat oratio tua, sed præ amentia esse nihil opinabar;* O Simonides, thy speech was full of weight, but I, mad wretch, thought it of no worth. Friends, ministers, nay, the chief master of sentences himself, delivered thee this as the masterpiece of wisdom, to remember that thy flesh will fail thee: 'Hear counsel, receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise for thy latter end,' Prov. xix. 20. But possibly thou, like Gallio, carest for none of these things. It is death to thee to think of death; thou hatest it, as Ahab did Micaiah, because it never speaketh well of thee; thy voice to it is as Pharaoh's to Moses, 'Get thee hence, let me see thy face no more.' It is said of Vitellius in Tacitus, that he was one hour *trepidus*, *dein temulentus*, fearful, the next drunken, in the very approach of his fatal ruin, striving to drown his fears in his cups. Thou art resolved to riot and revel, and therefore canst not endure to think of a reckoning. Well, put off the thoughts of it, as far and as much as thou canst; make as light of it as thy hardened heart will give thee leave, yet be confident, it is on its way riding post towards thee with a warrant from the God of heaven for thy execution; and oh then, when thou seest its grim face, how will thine heart tremble! and when thou hearest its dreadful voice, how will thine ears tingle! The flesh which thou now pamperest will then wax pale, and the vessels which now thou drawest thy comforts from will then run dregs; and then, oh then, how mournfully wilt thou screech out, O pastors, O teachers, the counsel which you gave me was of infinite weight and consequence, but I, fool, madman, had not the wit to follow it. Or as

Carolus, king of Sicily, did on his death-bed, Alas, alas! I am going to die, and yet have not begun to live.

I shall conclude this use with that sad relation which Athenæus makes of a great monarch's life and death, in which, as in a looking-glass, thou mayest see that flesh-pleasing vanities will end in soul-piercing miseries, and that, as wise as such a man may be counted by the world, yet in his latter end he is but a fool.

Ninus, the Assyrian monarch, had an ocean of gold and other riches, more than the sand in the Caspian Sea; he never saw the stars, he never stirred up the holy fire among the magi, nor touched his god with the sacred rod according to the law; he never offered sacrifice, nor worshipped the deity, nor administered justice; but he was most valiant to eat and drink, and having mingled his wines, he threw the rest on the stones. This man is dead, behold his sepulchre. And now hear where Ninus is: Sometimes I was Ninus, and drew the breath of a living man, but now am nothing but clay. I have nothing but what I did eat; and what I served on myself in lust, that was and is all my portion. The wealth with which I was esteemed blessed, my enemies meeting together shall bear away, as the mad Thyades carry a raw goat. I am gone to hell, and when I went thither, I carried neither gold, nor horse, nor silver chariot. I, that wore a mitre, am now a little heap of dust.

CHAPTER V.

Second use, An exhortation to sinners to prepare for death, with three quickening motives: Death will come certainly; it may come suddenly; when it comes, it will be too late to prepare.

The second use shall be by way of exhortation, which will run in two distinct channels, partly to the sensual worldlings, partly to the serious Christian. I shall speak one word to the wise, but in the first place, two words to the wicked.

If the flesh will fail you, mind the salvation of thy spirit. When one leaf falls in autumn, we conclude that all will follow after; by the death of others, thou mayest conclude thy own dissolution. When men's leases of the houses wherein they dwell are near expired, they think of providing another habitation, that they may

not be exposed to the injury of the wind and weather in the naked streets. Reader, I am come to thee with a message this day from the faithful God, and it is to acquaint thee that the lease of thy life is almost worn out, the time of thy departure is at hand; what house wilt thou provide for thy precious soul, that it may not be obnoxious to the roarings of damned spirits, and to the rage of tormenting devils? The Roman gladiators designed to death, were very careful so to contrive and carry themselves that they might fall handsomely. Sure I am, thou art one appointed for the dust; where, oh where is thy solicitousness to die comfortably? Possibly thou art one who hast often spoken of dressing thy body neatly for the coffin; thy wedding shift, the finest sheet; thy handsomest headclothes must all adorn thy clod of clay, and grace thy carcase, to entertain the worms at their feast, with clean and fine linen. But, in the meantime, thou hast no thoughts of dressing thy immortal soul against the coming of the bridegroom.

When thou diest, thou throwest thy last cast for thine everlasting estate; thou shalt never be allowed a second throw. An error in death, is like an error in the first concoction, which cannot be mended in the second. Where thou lodgest that night thou diest, thou art housed for ever. That work which is of such infinite weight, and can be done but once, had need to be done well. God hath given thee but one arrow to hit the mark with; shoot that at random, and he will never put another into thy quiver. God will allow no second edition to correct the errata of the first, therefore it concerns thee with all imaginable seriousness to consider what thou doest when thou diest.

One would think, thou shouldst take little comfort in any creature, whilst thy eternal state is thus in danger. Augustus wondered at the Roman citizen, that he could sleep quietly when he had a great burden of debt upon him. What rest canst thou have, what delight in anything thou enjoyest, who owest such vast sums to the infinite justice of God, when he is resolved to have full satisfaction either in this or the other world? When David offered Barzillai the pleasures and preferments of his own royal palace, he refused them, because he was to die within a while. 'How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem? Let thy servant turn back that I may die,' 2 Sam. xix. 34, 35, 36 —*i.e.*, Court me no courts, I have one foot in the grave, my glass is almost run, let me go home and die. Without controversy, thou hast more cause to wink on these withering comforts, and to betake thyself wholly to a diligent preparation for death. The The-

bans made a law, that no man should build a house before he had made his grave.

Every part of thy life may mind thee of thy death. The moralist speaks true: 'Thou livest by deaths.'[1] Thy food is the dead carcases of birds, or fish, or beasts; thy finest raiment is the worm's grave before it is thy garment. Look to the heavens: the sun riseth and setteth; so that life which now shineth pleasantly on thee will set. How much doth it behove thee to work the work of him that sent thee into the world while day lasteth, that thou mayest not set in a cloud, which will certainly prognosticate thy foul weather in the other world! Look down to the earth; there thou beholdest thy mother, out of whose womb thou didst at first come, and in whose bowels thou shalt ere long be laid. The dust and graves of others cry aloud to thee, as Gideon to his soldiers, Look on us, and do likewise. Oh trim thy soul against that time! If thou risest up, and walkest abroad in the streets, thou seest this house and that seat, where such a woman, such a man dwelt, and lo, the place which knew them shall know them no more; they are gone, and have carried nothing with them but their godliness or ungodliness. If thou liest down, thy sleep is the image of death; thou knowest not whether thou shalt awake in a bed of feathers, or in a bed of flames; but art certain, that shortly thy body shall lie down in the grave, and there remain till the resurrection. Look on thy companions, thou mayest see death sitting on their countenances; it is creeping on them in the deafness of their ears, in the dimness of their eyes, nay, it is posting towards them in the very height and zenith of their natural perfections. Look on thy own house of clay; death possibly looks out at thy windows, however it looks in at thy windows; thou wearest it in thy face, thou bearest it in thy bones, and doth it not behove thee to prepare for it? Naturalists tell us, that smelling of earth is very wholesome for consumptionate bodies. O reader, a serious thought of thy death, that thou art but dust, would be very wholesome for thy declining and decaying soul!

Hard bones steeped in vinegar and ashes grow so soft that they may be cut with a thread. Give me leave for one half hour to steep thy hard heart in such a mixture; possibly it may be so softened through the operation of the Spirit with the word, that thou mayest become wise unto salvation. It is reported of one Guerricus,[2] that hearing these words read in the church, 'And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died. All the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years:

[1] Mortibus vivimus.—*Senec.*

[2] Drexel., Eternit.

and he died. And all the days of Enos were nine hundred and five years: and he died. And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty-nine years: and he died,' Gen. v. 5. He was so strongly wrought upon by those words, and he died, and he died, that he gave himself wholly to devotion. Friend, if thou hast any drachm of true love to thy soul, and its unchangeable condition in the other world, the consideration of death would make a deep impression upon thee.

But that I may awaken and rouse thee while there is time and hope, and then help and heal thee, I shall in the prosecution of this exhortation,

First, Speak to thee somewhat that may be persuasive.

Secondly, Offer to thee somewhat that is directive.

First, I shall offer thee some thoughts which may quicken thee to a diligent provision for this time.

First, Dost thou not know that death will come certainly? As the young prophet said to Elisha, 'Dost thou know that the Lord will take thy master from thy head to-day?' 2 Kings ii. 3. Reader, dost thou know that the Lord will take thy soul out of thy body, and send it to the unknown regions of the other world, where thou shalt see such things as thou never sawest, hear such things as thou never heardest, and understand such things as thou didst never understand? Possibly thou wilt answer me, as Elisha then, 'I know it, hold your peace.' But truly I am ready to urge it again, being assured that thy knowledge is, as Cicero speaks of the Athenians, like artificial teeth, for show only; thou dost not yet know it for thy good; therefore give me leave to enforce it still. Dost thou know that God will bring thee to death, and to the house appointed for all the living? Dost thou know that thy ruddy countenance will wax pale, thy sparkling eyes look ghastly, thy warm blood cool in thy veins, thy marrow dry up in thy bones, thy skin shrivel, thy sinews shrink, nay, thy very heart-strings crack? And hast thou provided never a cordial against this hour? Dost thou not read in the writings of God himself, that no man hath power in the day of death, and there is no discharge in that war, Eccles. viii. 8. No man hath power, either to resist death's force, or to procure terms of peace. The greatest emperor, with the strength of all his dominions, cannot withstand death. The most eloquent orator, by his strongest reasons, and most pathetical expressions, cannot persuade death. The deepest counsellor, by all his policy, cannot outwit or cozen death.

O mighty death, saith the historian,[1] thou hast drawn together

[1] Sir Walter Raleigh's Hist. World, *in fine*.

all the far-stretched greatness, all the pride, cruelty, and ambition of man, and covered it with these two words, *Hic jacet.* There is no discharge in that war. Every one must go in person; there is no appearing by a proxy. Though the tenant would serve for his landlord, the subject for his sovereign, the father for his child, as David for Absalom, yet it will not be accepted. All must in their own persons appear in the field, and look that grim Goliath, death, in the face: 'It is appointed for all men once to die,' Heb. ix. God hath decreed it, and man cannot disannul it. The grammarian, as one observeth wittily, who can decline other nouns in every case, can decline death in no case. Death is every moment shooting its arrows abroad in the world, and doing execution; and though it shoots above thee, slaying the superiors; below thee, taking away thy inferiors; on thy right hand, killing this friend; on thy left hand, causing that acquaintance to drop; yet it will never cease shooting till thou art slain. Thy life for a while may be kept up, like a ball by the rackets, and tossed from hazard to hazard, yet at last it will fall to the earth. When once death, this son of a murderer, sin, comes to take away thine head, there will be none to shut the door, or hold him fast. Now men that must travel, arm themselves for all weather. Women that cannot escape their appointed sorrows, provide bezoar and amber powders, against that time. But oh what a madman art thou, who knowest certainly of the coming of this enemy, and that when he cometh he can both kill and damn, destroy both body and soul, yet takest no care to arm thyself for that hour!

In other things thou providest for what may be, and wilt thou not for that which must be? In summer thou layest in fuel and food, because it may be thou mayest live to spend it in winter. Thou workest early and late to increase thy heaps, and to add to thy hoards, because it may be thy children may come to enjoy it. Where is thy reason, then, to toil and moil for an uncertainty, and thus foolishly to neglect that which is of necessity?

Secondly, Dost thou know that death may come suddenly? Some diseases do no sooner appear, but we disappear. Death, like a flash of lightning, hath on a sudden burnt down many a body. It sometimes shoots white powder, doth execution without giving warning.

Diodorus died with sudden shame; Sophocles with sudden joy; Nabal with sudden fear; Pope Alexander was choked suddenly with a fly; Anacreon the poet with the kernel of a grape; Æschylus was killed by the shell of a tortoise, which the eagle let fall on his bald head, mistaking it for a rock; the Cardinal of Lorraine was

lighted to the chambers of death by a poisoned torch; a Duke of Brittany pressed to death in a crowd; King Henry the Second of France was killed at tilting; Senecio Cornelius had his breath stopped by a quinsy. I might name very many others, who took a short cut to their long homes. Belshazzar's carousing in his bowls drunk his bane; Amnon, merry at his dainties, meets with death; Zimri and Cozbi unload their lusts and their lives together; Korah and his companions find the earth opening her mouth and swallowing them up quick, though she stay for others till they are dead; Herod scarce ends his proud speech before he is sent to the place of silence; Ananias and Sapphira finish their lies and their lives at the same time. Scarce a week but, nigh those parts we live in, some or other, by violent or natural means, are suddenly sent into the other world. That which hath been one man's case may be any man's case. Reader, when thy breath goeth out, thou art not sure of taking it in again; thou mayest, like the fool, be talking of many years, when that God whose word must stand, may say, 'This night thy soul shall be required of thee;' and oh what will then become of thee? Thy eternal condition, that estate which is to be for ever and ever, dependeth on this uncertain life, and art not thou mad to be revelling and roaring, dallying and delaying, when thine unchangeable estate is in danger? Thieves, after the commission of their robberies, frequently repair to inns, where they drink joyfully, and divide their booty, when on a sudden the hue-and-cry arriveth at that town; the constable entereth their room, attacketh their persons, marreth all their mirth, and carrieth them to the jail, whence, after their trial for their felonies, they are carted to Tyburn. Many a sinner in the midst of his carnal triumph hath been haled to eternal torments, like that filthy adulterer mentioned by Luther, who went into hell out of the embraces of his harlot. The philosophers say that the weather will be warmish before a snow. When the sky is most clear, then the great thunder cometh; Sodom had a fair, sunshiny morning, but a storm of fire and brimstone before night. Sure I am, thou hast no promise to excuse thee in thy greatest pleasures from such a sudden punishment. Thou art already a condemned person, and thou wantest nothing but the messenger death; nothing but a hurdle, a horse, and a halter, as Judge Belknap in Richard the Second's time said of himself, to carry thee to thy deserved execution:[1] Ps. lxiv. 7, 'God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded.' When the pie is priding herself on the top of a tree, little

[1] Speed.

thinking of a fowler so near, she is fetched down by a sudden shot.[1]

It may be thou trusteth to thy youth and strength; because thou feelest no infirmity, therefore thou fearest no mortality. Thou thinkest death should go to the dead bones and dry breasts, to such as see with four eyes, and go on three legs; but dost thou not know that death never observeth the laws of nature. As young as thou art, thou mayest be rotten before thou art ripe; thy sun may set at high noon. The Jews have a proverb, that the old ass often carrieth the young ass's skin to the market; blossoms are liable to nipping, as well as full-grown fruit to rotting. Have not several been married and buried in the same week; nay, dressed by the same hands in one day for their weddings and their coffins? Bensirah the Jew hath a good saying, The bride went into her chamber, and knew not what should befall her there: Prov. xxvii. 1, 'Therefore boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.' Is it thy strength thou trustest to? alas! the leviathan of death laughs at the shaking of that spear; he counts thy strength but as straw, and thy youth but as rotten wood; he maketh a leak in a strong new vessel, and it presently sinketh. Though thy body be never so strong a fort, death, to take it, needeth not besiege or block it up with lingering diseases, but can undermine it, and blow it down in a moment. Think therefore with thyself: This day may be the last day that ever I shall see; this hour may be the last hour that ever I shall spend; these words may be the last words that ever I shall speak. Oh what a fool am I to live thus contentedly without fear, next door to the eternal fire; there is but one step betwixt me and hell, and for aught I know, the very next step that I take may be thither, and then, wo and alas, I am gone for ever! Surely this consideration, like a hectic fever, might cause an irrecoverable consumption of all thy carnal joy. Death is called war, Eccles. viii. 8: thou knowest not but orders may come from the Lord of hosts for thy sudden march; thou mayest not have an hour's warning to put on thy armour or prepare thyself.

Invasions are judged far more dangerous than pitched battles, because those are sudden, and usually take men unprovided. I must tell thee that, whenever death cometh, it will be dreadful and dangerous; for, continuing as thou art, it will surprise thee unprepared, and unable to make any resistance. Oh, how it will tear thy

[1] Maximum vivendi impedimentum est expectatio quæ pendet ex crastino.—*Senec. de Brevitat. Vitæ.*, cap. 9.

soul like a lion, renting it in pieces, whilst there is none to deliver it! No chapman comes amiss to him whose shop is ever furnished; but every enemy will foil him who goeth always unarmed and naked. Death to a sinner is always sudden; they go down quick into hell, Job xxi.

Thirdly, Dost thou not know that, whensoever death comes, it will be too late to prepare for it? The ship must be rigged in the harbour; it will be too late to do it in the main ocean in a storm. Probably enough, though now thou canst spend thy days delightfully without Christ and grace, yet, when the bridegroom cometh by death, thou wilt, as the foolish virgins, talk of getting oil, because thy lamps will be then gone out; but, alas! then it will be too late; only such as are ready enter in with him. I have read of a woman in Cambridge, who, lying on her death-bed, was visited by persons of worth and piety, and heard much heavenly discourse from them; but they could hear nothing from her, save this, Call time again, call time again. But time runs swiftly, and being once past, is irrecoverable. Time, saith Bernard, were a good commodity in hell, if it could be bought up at any rate. Ah, when thou comest to die, a week, a day, nay, an hour, would be more worth to thee than all the world. But it will be impossible to put off the trial which death hath with thee for thy soul till another time, till another term. When death calleth, at leisure or not at leisure, ready or unready, willing or unwilling, thou shalt not deny, but must go the way whence thou shalt never return.

The tide will not stay for the greatest merchant's goods; they must be shipped before, or left behind. Death will not stay for any man to freight his heart with grace; he must do it before death cometh, or it can never be done. If our spiritual change be not before our natural change, we are miserable unchangeably. Petronius speaks of one Eumolpus, who in a desperate storm was composing verses, and when the ship split upon a rock, and they called to him to shift for himself, he answered, Let me alone till I have finished one verse, which I perceive to be lame. Death will not wait whilst thou finishest the most serious works.

It is said of Demetrius, after that though he lived a slave all his lifetime, yet when he lay on his death-bed he earnestly desired manumission, that he might descend into his grave in freedom. Reader, I doubt not but, though thou livest a slave to sin and Satan, yet thou wouldst die the Lord's freeman; but God himself tells thee, that if thy life be in bondage to thy lusts, when death

comes, there is no getting thy liberty, Eccles. ix. 10. Either now mind thy soul, and ensure thy salvation, or it can never be done; there is no doing it in the place whither thou art going. Life is death's seed-time, and death is life's harvest; expect thy crop, both for quality and quantity, answerable to thy seed which thou now sowest. Cicero saith of Hercules, that he had never been enrolled among the gods in heaven, if he had not laid out his way thither whilst he lived. Neither canst thou live with God hereafter, unless thou livest to God here.

Friend, think of it seriously; thy preparation for death must be now or never. Bees work hard in summer, flying over this and the other field, sucking this and the other flower, and all to lay in provision against winter, at which time else they must starve, no honey being then to be made. The shell-fish opens and takes in moisture whilst the tide floweth in upon them, that they may be supplied when the waters ebb; and wilt thou, like a drone, now sleep and then starve? Let thy reason judge, is it a fit time to dress thy soul for the marriage feast of the Lamb in the dark night of death? or what canst thou think to do in that dismal hour? Conscience will tell thee thou hadst thy candle of life set up to have wrought by, and that is burned to the snuff whilst thy work is still undone; the day is past, thy soul is lost, because thou, unworthy wretch, didst defer it till it was too late. Wilt thou call to the sun of thy life, as Joshua did, Stand still for one hour, that I may be avenged of these fleshly lusts, which hinder me of the heavenly Canaan? Alas, alas! it will not hear thee, it cannot obey thee, for time shall be no more with thee; thou art entering upon thy eternity. Remember that thou art warned of it, and do not,—as Cæsar, being warned by Artemidorus of a conspiracy to slay him suddenly, pocketed up the paper, and was very busy in saluting the people, till at last he was slain,—so trouble thyself with trifles, as to compliment away thy soul and salvation.

CHAPTER VI.

Three motives more: A dying hour will be a trying hour; the misery of the unprepared; the felicity of the prepared.

Fourthly, Dost thou not know that thy dying hour will be a trying hour? When grapes come to the press, they come to the proof. The mariner's skill is seen in a storm. The soldier's cour-

age is known when he comes to the combat; while he lieth in garrison he may boast much, but then he fighteth only with his words, but in a battle it will appear how he can handle his sword. Many flourish with their colours, when they know their enemies to be far enough off, who change their countenances when they meet them in the field. In thy lifetime thou art walled in, and liest warm in the confluence of creature comforts, no visible enemy appeareth against thee; but when this champion sheweth himself, bidding thee defiance, and offering to fight with thee for thy soul, and Saviour, and heaven, and happiness, at the sight of whom the hearts of kings and captains have melted like grease before the sun, then, then thou wilt perceive what metal thou art made of; whether thou hast the faith and spirit of a David, and canst encounter him in the Lord or no. Now thou art a vessel in the harbour, and so art kept above water, though several things are wanting; but when thou launchest into the ocean, the boisterous waves, and tempestuous winds, will soon discover thy leaks, and tell thee what is lacking.

It is like enough thou hast some armour with which thou hopest to defend thyself against the strokes of death; but know, for a truth, that death will stab thee through all thy paper shields of profession, privileges, and performances, since thou art a stranger to Christ and the power of godliness.

Thy life is like the letting down a fisherman's net; thy death as the drawing up of this net. While the net is down a man cannot tell certainly what he shall catch, for the nets may break, and the fish may escape; whilst thou livest, it is not so evident what thine aim is, or what thine end shall be; but at thy death, when the net shall be drawn up, then thou wilt see what draught thou hast made. Though godly men at their deaths may look up to the Lord of life, and say, At thy word we have let down our nets and caught abundantly; we fished for holiness, and have caught happiness, fished for grace, and have caught glory, and honour, and immortality, and eternal life; yet when the net of thy life cometh to be drawn up, thou mayest say with Peter, Lord, I have fished all night, all my lifetime, and have caught nothing; I fished for honours, and pleasures, and riches, and I have caught nothing but the weeds of wrath and damnation. I blessed myself many a time, like the vain, confident husbandman, in the goodly show which my corn made on the ground; but now the threshing time is come, I find nothing but straw and chaff, vanity and vexation.

It must needs be a trying hour, upon this twofold account:

1. Because all thy temporal mercies will then leave thee. When the hand of death shakes the tree of life, all those fair blossoms will fall off. 'We brought nothing into the world, and it is certain that we shall carry nothing out of this world,' 1 Tim. vi. 7. The hedgehog gets up to a pile of apples, and gathers as many as she can upon her prickles; but when she comes to her resting-place—her hole—she throweth them all down, and carrieth not one in with her. Thus men walk in a vain shadow, and disquiet themselves in vain; heaping up riches which die with them; naked they come into the world, and naked they go out of the world. Plutarch wisely compareth great men to counters, which one hour stand for thousands, and the next hour for nothing. Hermocrates, being unwilling that any man should enjoy his estate after his death, made himself in his will his own heir. Athenæus reports of a covetous wretch, that on his death-bed swallowed many pieces of gold, and sewed up others in his coat, commanding that they should be buried with him; but who doth not laugh at such folly?

In that storm of death, all thy glory and riches, which thou hast taken such pains, and wrought so hard for, must be thrown overboard. As the great Sultan hath an officer to search all persons that come into his presence, and take away all their weapons, so the great God, by his messenger death, will search thee, and take away all thy wealth. In that day the crowns of princes and shackles of prisoners, the russet of beggars and scarlet of courtiers, the honours and offices of the highest, the meat, and drink, and sleep, and mirth of the lowest, must be laid by.

As it was said of Sarah, it ceased to be with her after the former manner; so the time will come that it may be said of thee, it ceaseth to be with him after the former manner. Now thou canst relish thy food, and delight in thy friends, ravish thine ears with melodious sounds, and thine eyes with curious sights, rejoice in things of naught, and be titled[1] with vanity and nothing; but when death comes, it will cease to be with thee after the former manner. Now thou pleasest thyself in thy lovely relations, and pridest thyself in thy stately possessions; these weak props preserve thy spirit from sinking at present; but ah! what will become of thee, when they shall all be taken away from thee, when thou shalt bid thy wife, and children, and friends, farewell for ever? and say to thy house, and lands, and credit, and sports, and pastimes, adieu to eternity; or as dying Pope Adrian did, O my soul, the loving companion of my body, thou are going into a solitary place, where thou shalt

[1] Qu. 'tickled'?—ED.

never, never more take pleasure. At the hour of death thy most costly jewels, and most pleasing delights, will be as the pearl in an oyster, not thy privilege or perfections, but thy disease and destruction.

When those carnal comforts are gone, thy spiritual comforts, if thou hast any, will be known. When the hand which held thee up by the chin, and kept thee above water, is taken away, thy own skill in swimming will be discovered. When the virtue of those cordials which supported thy spirits for a time is spent, it will appear whether nature hath any strength or no.

2. Because thy spiritual enemies will then assail thee. Those adversaries which before were hid, and lay lurking, as it were, under the hedge, will then appear openly, and wound thee to the very heart.

Thy sins will then assault thee. When the prisoner appeareth before the judge, then the evidence is produced, and the witnesses, which were never before thought of, shew themselves. When thou goest to stand before the judge of the whole earth, thy sins will bear thee company. In the night of death, those frightful ghosts will walk. Thy lusts, which are now lying dormant, will then be rampant. Thou mayest say to death, as the woman to the prophet, Art thou come to call my sins to remembrance, and to slay my son? Art thou come to call my sins to remembrance, and to slay my soul?

While the hedgehog walketh on the land, she seemeth not so uncomely, but when she sprawleth in the waters, her deformity appeareth. Whilst men walk up and down, they usually look in false glasses, and judge themselves fair, because some may be found who are more foul; but death will pluck off their masks, present them with a true glass, in which all the spots, and dirt, and wrinkles in the faces of their hearts and lives will be visible. Men flatter them often, but death never flattered any.

It is observable that Haman, the day that he died, was called and named according to his desert: The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman,' Esther vii. 6. Haman probably had many a title given him before. Some had styled him Haman the great, Haman the magnificent, Haman the prince, Haman the virtuous; all before nicknamed him; but when he comes to die, it is Haman the enemy, it is wicked Haman; then he is called by his proper name. Since he was born, he never heard his right name till now. The enemy and adversary is this wicked Haman. So it may be, in thy lifetime, thou art styled great or gracious, because in place higher than others; but when death comes, those gaudy colours will be washed off, and thou shalt hear, not the King of heaven's

favourite, but his fool; when thou art nigh thy execution, as he was, it will not be the worshipful, but the wicked, Haman.

Satan will then play hardest upon thee with his biggest guns; when his time is but little, his rage is greatest. This is his hour, and the power of darkness. As the Turkish emperor, when he hath blunted the edge of his enemies' weapons, and wearied their arms with thousands of his ordinary soldiers, then falls on with his janizaries—the pride and power of his kingdom; when thou, through pain of body and perplexity of mind, are least able to resist, then the devil cometh with his fiercest assaults. If on thy death-bed thou shouldst think of turning to God, he hath a thousand ways to turn thee off from such thoughts; when there is but one battle for a kingdom, what wounds and work, what fighting and striving, is there! When the devil, who knoweth thee to be his own already, hath but a few hours to wait on thee, and then thou art his for ever, be assured he will watch by thy sick-bed night and day, and if all the power and policy of hell can prevent it, neither cordial shall benefit thy body, nor counsel thy soul.

Will not this be a trying hour to thee, when the cloth shall be drawn, and thy bodily comforts all taken off the table? Will not death search thee to the quick, when those thieves, in their frightful vizards, all thy sins, in that night will break in upon thee? As the elders of Samaria said of Jehu, when he sent to them to prepare and provide to fight with him, Two kings stood not before him, and how shall we? Adam and angels could not stand before sin, (it laid them both low,) and how wilt thou? Believe it, those that have been lions in peace, have carried themselves like harts in this war. Brutus, whose blood seemed as warm, and to rise to as great a degree of courage, as any since the Roman consuls, yet when Furius came to cut his throat, he cried out like a child. Heathen, who saw nothing almost in death, save rottenness and corruption accompanying the body, who look no farther than the grave, have esteemed death the king of terrors, the terrible of terribles, and have been frighted into a fever upon the sight of its forerunner. But death is not half so terrible to a moral heathen as it will be to thee, O wicked Christian! Thou knowest that thy death's-day is thy doom's-day; that the axe of death will cut thee down as fuel for the unquenchable fire; that as soon as thou art carried from the earth, thou art cast into hell. Thou presumest that thou shalt behave thyself like a man in the onset with this enemy, but I dare be the prophet to foretell that thy courage will be less than a woman's in the issue; for man, man, dost thou not know, as Pilate said to

Christ, that death hath power to kill thee, as well as to release thee? it can send thy body to the grave, and thy soul to the place of endless misery and desperation.

Fifthly, Dost thou not know the misery of every carnal man at death? In thy lifetime thou doest the devil's work, and when death cometh he will pay thee thy wages. Sin at present is a bee with honey in its mouth, but then the sting in its tail will appear and be felt. Now thou hast thy savoury meat and sugared draughts, but then cometh the reckoning. Some tell us that sweetmeats, though pleasant to the taste, are very heavy in the stomach. Sure I am the sweet morsels of sin, which now thou feedest so merrily on, will then lie heavier than lead on thy heart, and be more bitter than gall and wormwood. Thou mayest see now and then in this world, through the flood-gates, some drops of wrath leaking in upon thy soul; but when death cometh, the flood-gates will be all pulled up, and then, oh then, what a torrent of wrath will come pouring down upon thee! Here thou sippest of the cup of the Lord's fury, but then thou shalt drink the dregs thereof. The pains which thou sufferest here are only an earnest-penny of thy eternal punishment. It was a cruel mercy which Tamerlane shewed to three hundred lepers, in killing them to rid them out of their misery; but death will be altogether merciless and cruel to thee, for it only freeth thee from the jail, to carry thee to the gallows; it will deliver thee from whips, but scourge thee with scorpions; its little finger will be infinitely heavier than the loins of this miserable life. When God saith to death concerning thee, as Judas to the Jews concerning Christ, Take him and lead him away safely; who can tell the mockings, buffetings, piercings, scourgings, the cursed, painful, and shameful, eternal death which will ensue?

Suppose, for thy soul's sake, in earnest, as Turannius did in jest —who would needs be laid in his bed as one who had breathed out his last, and caused his whole family to bewail his death[1]—that thou wert ascending up to thy chamber, whence thou shouldst never come down, till carried on men's shoulders, betaking thyself to thy dying bed. Thou lookest on thy body, and beholdest death's harbinger, sickness, preparing his way before him. Oh how thy colour comes and goes, at the sight of this axe, which the hand of death hath laid at the root of thy tree of life! Like the locust, thou art ready beforehand to die at the sight of this polypus. Now thou art laid down on that bed whence thou shalt never rise more, thy next

[1] Componi se in lecto et velut exanimem, a circumstante familia plangi jussit. —*Senec., de Brevit. Vitæ, cap. ult.*

work is to seek for some shelter against this approaching storm. Thou lookest upward, and seest that God, full of fury, whom thou didst many a time dare to his very face, and resolved, since thou wouldst live without his counsels, thou shalt die without his comforts; thou lookest downward, and seest Satan, who formerly was thy flatterer and seeming friend, now thy tormentor and desperate foe, waiting, like the jailer, to drag thee to his own den; thou lookest inward, and conscience presents thee with a black catalogue of thy bloody crimes, and in the name of God, whose officer it is, arresteth thee for them, and chargeth thee to answer them at his dreadful tribunal, to which thou art even now going; thou lookest without thee, among thy friends and relations, and earthly comforts, and seekest the living among the dead, as the angel said to the woman—living comforts amongst dead creatures—but, alas! it is not there. Thy wife, and children, and neighbours may weep with thee, but cannot ease thee of one tear; they may give thee occasion to call to mind thy sins, but not abate the least of thy sorrows. Miserable comforts are they all, physicians of no value. I have read of one in Holland, that being condemned for killing her bastard, when the messenger was dragging her away to execution, looks pitifully on her father, a person of quality then present, and casts a doleful eye on her mother. Will ye not help me? Where are your bowels? Can ye find in your hearts to let your own child be thus cruelly dealt with? But, alas! they might not, they could not, help her. Such truly is thy case; thou lookest on thy right and left hand, on thy father, or mother, or husband, or house, or land, and dost, as it were, call for help, but, alas! they cannot give thee any comfort in this groaning hour, in this thy dreadful conflict; they may be about thy body, as ravens about a carcase, to devour it, to get something from thee, but they cannot defend it.

Well, now the screech owl of death, which all this while clawed about thy windows, is entered thy chamber, flieth towards thy bedside; the messenger by this time is come to thee, and sheweth thee the warrant for thy speedy and immediate execution. Now, now is the beginning of thy sorrows. Live thou canst not, and die thou darest not; fain wouldst thou be rid of thy pain, but fearful lest thou shouldst go to a worse place; thou dislikest thy dirty, nasty dungeon, but dost not like to exchange it for a gibbet; thou choosest to stay, but death will not be denied—thou must go. Thou sayest, thou art not at leisure, thou hast such worldly affairs of concernment to finish, thou art not prepared, thou hast the business of thy soul, a work of infinite weight, to begin, as they for

their farms, so thou, I pray thee, have me excused. Thou beggest one week, one day, nay, one hour, death will not wait one moment; death pulls thee, as Benaiah did Joab, towards the place of thy eternal punishment. Thy soul clings about thy body, as he about the altar, and still sings loath to depart; death, like Solomon's officer, renteth thee in pieces by force, and slayeth thee there. Now thy soul standeth quivering upon thy pale lips, ready to take its flight to its everlasting home; thou seest devils looking and longing, like so many ravening and roaring lions, for thee their prey. Thy past sins trouble thee; oh how thou cursest thy pastimes and pleasures, thy companions and possessions, which stole away thy time and affections, and hindered thy preparation for such a dreadful hour! Thy future sufferings terrify thee; and ah, thinkest thou, Whither am I going? Where must my soul lodge this night? In what place, with what persons, must I dwell for ever? Oh that I had provided for this beforehand! How many a time did God wish me, ministers persuade me, Christ beseech me, and conscience warn me; but fool that I was, I rejected the entreaties of Christ, stifled the convictions of conscience, scorned the counsels of men, set at nought the commands of God, trampled on Sabbath and sermons, and seasons of grace, as things of no worth; and now my day is past, my soul is lost, heaven's gate is shut, and, woe and alas, it is too late. The blessed God, in whose favour is life, to whom I, wicked wretch, said, Depart from me, hath now fixed my doom, to depart from him for ever. Oh what unconceivable evil is there in the loss of so great a good! ten thousand hells are included in my banishment from that heaven. The frightful and cruel devils, whom I defied in my words, but deified in my heart and works, whose lust were my laws, and whose wills were my warrant, shall be my masters, tyrants and tormentors to all eternity. My own spirit (oh that I could flee from myself!) is infinitely more grievous and painful, than ever sword was to any flesh. What wolf in the breast, what pangs of the stone, what pain of the teeth, what cancer in the bowels, ever caused the thousandth part of that torture, which the worm in my conscience causeth! but it is as impossible for me to avoid it, as for the wounded deer to run from the arrow that sticks in his side. The fire burns me, yet consumes me not; gives heat to scorch me, but no light to refresh me. Here is blackness of darkness, yet I can see the heart-cutting frowns of an angry God, and can see myself to be infinitely miserable. I enjoy a long night, but no rest; I must always complain, but have no relief; here is crying without compassion; all pain without the

least pity; sorrow without the smallest drachm of solace, or the least drop of succour. If my misery were ever to end, though after so many millions of ages as all the men in the world could number, my heart would have some hope; but, alas, alas! as it is intolerable, so it is unchangeable. As long as God is God, I must fry in these flames; all my tears shall not quench the least spark of this fire; though I must weep for ever, all this fire will not dry up the least tear, though it will burn for ever. Oh that I had never been! oh that I might never be! What! must I ever live, and yet never live? must I ever die, and yet never die? Consider this, all ye that pass by, Is there any sorrow like unto our sorrows, wherewith the Lord afflicteth us in the day of his fierce wrath; for who can dwell in such everlasting burnings? and who can abide such devouring flames? Oh that the mountains would fall on us, and the hills cover us, from the presence of him that sits upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, because the day of his wrath is come, and who can stand! Oh what a dreadful sunset of life will it be,which brings such a dismal night of eternal death!

O friend, think of this now, how wilt thou do to die? If thou shouldst leave this life in the service of thy lusts, thou art thus irrecoverably lost; thou art miserable beyond all expressions, beyond all conceptions. If Job, because of some temporal calamity, cursed the day wherein he was born, and the messenger that brought tidings of his birth, and desired to die rather than to endure it, whom wilt thou curse, or rather, whom wilt thou not curse, when under the sense of eternal misery; surely thou wilt seek for death, but not find it, dig for it, but it will flee from thee. Though Judas could make himself away out of the hell he had on earth, yet he cannot out of the hell he hath in hell. When thou diest, thou art stated by God himself, and there is no appeal from this judge, nor reversing of his judgment. It is the observation of the schoolmen, that what befell the angels when they sinned, that befalls every wicked man at death. The angels, upon the first act of sin, were presently by God himself stated in an irrecoverable condition of misery; so wicked men, upon the last act of their lives, are fixed as to their eternal woeful estates: 'It is appointed for all men once to die, and after death the judgment.'

Sixthly, Dost thou know the felicity which upon thy death thou shouldst enter into if thou wert prepared for it? As the good housewife looketh for winter, but feareth it not, being prepared for it with double clothing; so thou mightst expect death, but not fear it, being prepared for it with armour of proof. Sirens, some

write, screech horribly when they die, but swans sing then most sweetly. Though sinners roar bitterly when they behold that sea of scalding lead in which they must swim naked for ever, yet thou shouldst, like the apostle, desire to depart, wish for that hour wherein thou shouldst loose anchor and sail to Christ, as the word signifieth,[1] Phil. i. 23. Thy dying day would be thy wedding day, as the martyrs called theirs, wherein the fairest of ten thousand and thy soul, now contracted, should be solemnly espoused together. As frightful a lion as death is to others, that their souls are fain to be torn from their bodies, thou mightst, like a weary child, call to be laid to bed, knowing that it will send thee to thine everlasting happy rest. If it be a happy death to die willingly, as the moralist affirmeth,[2] thou shouldst give up the ghost, and be a volunteer in that war. Nature teacheth that death is the end of misery; but grace would teach thee that death would be the beginning of thy felicity—it could not hurt thee. Death among saints drives but a poor trade; it may destroy the body, and when that is done, it hath done all its feats; like a fierce mastiff whose teeth are broken out, it may bark and tear thy tattered coat, but cannot bite to the bone. This bee fastened her sting in Christ's blessed body, and is ever since a drone to his members. Though the wicked are gathered at death—as the Rabbins sense that place, 'Gather not my soul with sinners, let me not die their deaths,' Ps. xxvi. 9—as sticks that lie on the ground for the fire, or as grapes for the winepress of God's fury, yet thou shouldst be gathered, according to the Hebrew, Isa. lvii. 2, as women do cordial flowers to candy and preserve them.

Nay, death would exceedingly help thee. Plutarch saith that strong bodies can eat and concoct serpents. Thou mayest, like Samson, fetch meat out of this eater, and out of this strong lion sweetness. Death, ever since it walked to mount Calvary, is turned, to believers, into the gate of life. A heathen could say, Life is not taken away from me by the immortal gods, but death is given to me;[3] meaning, as an act of grace and favour. Much more may a Christian esteem death, which puts an end to his trials, and sins, and troubles, a privilege rather than a punishment. 'Blessed are they that die in the Lord; they rest from their labours,' Rev. xiv. 13.

[1] Ἀναλυσαι, *Solvere anchoram*, a metaphor from a ship at anchor, importing a sailing from this present life to another port. So the Syriac, Chrysostom, Beza, Erasmus, and others take it.

[2] Bene mori est libenter mori.—*Senec.*, Epist. 61.

[3] Mihi non a diis immortalibus vita erepta est, sed mors donata est.—*Cicer.*, lib. iii. *de Orat.*

When sickness first gives thee notice that death is at hand, thou mightst make the servant welcome for bringing thee the good news of his approaching master. Thy heart may leap to think that though thou art, like Peter, now bound in the fetters of sin, and imprisoned amongst sinners, yet the angel is coming who will, with one blow on thy side, cause thy shackles to fall off, open the prison doors, and set thy soul into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. When this Samuel is come to thy gate, thou needest not, as the elders of Bethlehem, tremble at his coming, for if thou askest the question, Comest thou peaceably? he will answer, Yea, peaceably; I am come to offer thee up a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour, acceptable to God in Jesus Christ; the pale face of death would please thee better than the greatest beauty on earth. When thou liest on thy dying bed, and physicians had given over thy body, Christ would visit and give thy soul such a cordial that thou mightst walk in the valley of the shadow of death and fear none ill. How willingly mayest thou part with the militant members of Christ for the triumphant saints! How cheerfully mayest thou leave thy nearest relations for thy dearest Father and elder brother! How comfortably mayest thou take thy leave of all the riches, honours, and pleasures of this life, knowing that though death cometh to others with a voider to take away all their fleshly comforts and carnal contentments, nay, all their hopes, and happiness, and heaven, and hereby, when they break at death, they are quite bankrupts for ever; yet it is to thee only a servant, to remove the first course of more gross fare, of which thou hast had thy fill, and to make way for the second, which consisteth of all sorts of dainties and delicates.

When thy soul was ready to bid thy body good-night, till the morning of the resurrection, thou mightst joyfully commit thy body to the grave, as a bed of spices, and shouldst see glorious angels waiting on thy soul, and carrying it, as Elijah, in a triumphant chariot into heaven's blessed court. There thou shouldst be saluted by the noble host and celestial choir of saints and angels, welcomed by the holy Jesus and gracious God, in the fruition of whom thou shouldst be perfectly happy for ever and ever. If there were so much joy in heaven at thy repentance, when thou wert but set into the way, what joy will there be when, through so many hazards and hardships, thou art come to thy journey's end! Thus, friend, wert thou but prepared, death would be to thee a change from a prison to a palace, from sorrows to solace, from pain to pleasure, from heaviness to happiness. Thy winding-

sheet would wipe off all tears from thine eyes; all thy sins and sorrows should be buried in thy grave; and the vessel of thy soul, which in this life is weather-beaten, tossed up and down with the boisterous billows of temptations, and the high winds of the world's wrath and the devil's rage, would there arrive at a blessed and everlasting harbour. Death would sound a retreat, and call thee out of the field, where the bullets fly thick and threefold in thy combat with the flesh, world, and wicked one, to receive a crown of life. Hence that ancient custom of placing a laurel crown at the head of the dead man's coffin in token of victory and triumph.

CHAPTER VII.

What is requisite to preparation for death. A change of state and a change of nature, with a most gracious offer from the most high God to sinners.

If anything, or all that I have written, hath wrought thee to a resolution to prepare for thy dissolution; if these motives, which thy conscience must needs confess to be weighty, have melted thee and made thee pliable for a divine stamp and mould, I shall acquaint thee with the means and way how thou mayest die well. Having finished what is persuasive,

Secondly, I shall offer thee somewhat that is directive. And know, reader, further, that there is no other medicine in the world which can possibly cure thy wounded dying soul, but that which I have from God to prescribe thee; throw away this, or neglect the rules in applying it to thy sores, or advise with flattering mountebanks, and thy lamentable condition will be irrecoverable, thy dreadful estate will be desperate. I shall not, like an empiric, try new tricks or remedies on thy bleeding, gasping soul, but give thee that receipt, consisting but of two ingredients, which the great physician hath left in writing under his own hand, and which thousands have experienced to be effectual for their cure, whose souls are made thereby at this hour, as his body in the Gospel, every whit whole.

Pride, or an ambitious desire of self-sufficiency, and self-subsistence, was the stone at which man at first stumbled, and fell into the bottomless pit of matchless misery—it was the fatal knife which cut the throat of his glorious hopes and happiness; the wise God therefore, like a tender father, in man's recovery, takes special care

to lay these weapons out of the children's way, by which they had wrought themselves such woe. Hence it is that he hath chosen those two graces to make us happy, and carry us to himself, which speak us to be most beggarly, and carry us most out of ourselves, faith and repentance. Faith teacheth us to deny ourselves, as utterly weak; and repentance causeth us to abhor ourselves, as altogether unworthy. Repentance discovereth our nakedness, and obnoxiousness thereby to shame and suffering; and faith telleth that our own rags come infinitely short of hiding it, and that we must fetch our garments out of another's wardrobe. The whole globe of Christianity divideth itself into these two hemispheres. As the bodily life consisteth in natural heat and radical moisture, so the life of the soul in faith and repentance.

Therefore, reader, if thou wouldst die well, undergo that great change with comfort; it is absolutely and indispensably necessary that thou mind these two changes beforehand: a change of thy state or condition, which is wrought by faith; and a change of thy nature or disposition, which is wrought by repentance.

The door of thy happiness hangs on these two hinges: the merit of Christ without thee, and its acceptation with God for the justification of thy person; and secondly, the Spirit of Christ within thee, and its operation for the sanctification of thy nature.

First, There must of necessity be a change of thy state by faith in Christ, or thou canst never put thy head into the other world with comfort. There is no such shroud, such a winding-sheet, for the departing soul to be wrapt in, as the righteousness of a Saviour; Paul's care was that he might not be found naked, 2 Cor. v. 3. Oh it is sad indeed for thy soul to be summoned to appear before the jealous God, and to have nothing to cover thy nakedness. Adam, knowing that he was naked, fled from God. Guilt cannot but be shy of a judge; sore eyes will not endure the sight of the sun. God is a consuming fire to all who have not Jesus Christ for their screen. He seemeth[1] to every person, as Joseph to the patriarchs, 'Thou shalt not see my face with joy, except thou bringest thy brother with thee.' It is alone in the garments of thine elder brother that thou canst have a sound hope to receive the blessing. Every one who dieth out of Christ, dieth in his sins, John viii. 21. And were not men's hearts desperately hard, it were impossible that any should die in their senses who die in their sins; all would die distracted who die thus defiled.

By nature thou art under the covenant of works, and so bound to earn happiness by thy fingers' ends, if ever thou wilt have it; in

[1] Qu. 'sayeth'?—ED.

which sailing, for no mere man ever sailed to bliss in that bottom, thou art liable to the curse of the law, a bond-slave to thy jailer Satan, and an heir of hell. If ever, therefore, thou wouldst arrive at heaven's blessed port, there is a necessity of embarking in another vessel, and that is the covenant of grace, by which thou mayest be freed from all the former crosses and curses, and filled with all the special comforts and rich cordials of the gospel. Now it is faith in Christ by which thou comest to be shipped in this covenant, and surely it concerns thee then to get this grace. Many, nay, millions, are drowned and cast away, sailing through the boisterous billows of death, in the broken bottom of the first covenant, when others, in the second, ride in triumph, with top and top-gallant, to their desired haven.

Reader, if thou art out of this covenant, thou art like a man in the midst of the sea, without any boat or bottom; though some in vessels at the same time are safe, yet he is sure to sink. It is related of one that, being at the point of drowning in a river, and looking up and seeing a rainbow in the sky, the sign of God's covenant that he would never more drown the world, he made this conclusion: What if God save the whole world from a deluge of waters, and suffer me to perish in this river, what good will that covenant do me? So say I to thee, Though thousands escape a deluge of wrath through God's promise to Christ, and in Christ to his purified ones, what good will it do thee if thou perishest?

An interest in this covenant was the living comfort of dying David: 'He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make not my house to grow,' 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Mark how the pious king draws all the wine which made his heart glad, in one of his last hours, from this pipe. Death is one of the sourest things in the world, and such things require much sugar to make them sweet. David found so much honey in the covenant, that therewith he made death itself a pleasant, a desirable dish. If you observe the beginning of the chapter, you will find that his end was near. 'Now these be the last words of David.' But this, this was the quiet and ease of his heart, that God's covenant with him was everlasting and without end. As death is famous for its terror, being king thereof, so also for his power, it brings down the mighty princes and potentates of the earth. Samson was but a child in death's hands; hence we read, when Scripture would draw strength in its full proportion and length, 'as strong as death,' Cant. viii. 6; but as strong as death is, David knew it could not break in sunder the

covenant between God and him, nor dissolve the union betwixt his Saviour and his soul. The firmness of this covenant being sure footing for faith to stand on, is that which puts life into a dying Christian. As death, though it parted the soul and body of Christ, parted neither of them from the divine nature; they were as a sword drawn by a man, the sword is in one hand separated from the sheath in the other hand, but neither of them separated from the man; so though death break the natural union between the believer's soul and body, it cannot break the mystical union between Jesus Christ and the soul; therefore saints are said to sleep in Jesus, 1 Thes. iv. 14. And truly, by the virtue of this cordial, this covenant, they are so far from flying back at the sight of their foe death, that they can look him in the face with courage and confidence. See how they triumph over him, as if he were already under their feet, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' 1 Cor. xv. 57, 58. 'The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.' Hark, they speak as challengers, daring their disarmed enemy to meet them in the field; and they speak as conquerors, being assured, through the captain of their salvation, of the victory before they fight. Epiphanius saith that Adam was buried in Calvary, where Christ was crucified. Sure it is, that Christ at Calvary did somewhat which made the Christian's bed soft and easy; that whereas it would have been a bed of thorns, he turned it into a bed of down, and thereby the believer comes to lie on it so contentedly, and to sleep so sweetly and comfortably.

By this time, reader, I hope thou understandest the necessity and benefit of this relative change. With this covenant thou art armed *cap-à-pie* with armour of proof, with the righteousness of Christ, which is law-proof, death-proof, and judgment-proof, and leavest death wholly disarmed and naked. Without this thou hast no weapons, and findest death a man of war. In the forequoted place, thou seest that sin is the sting of death, and the strength of sin is the law. The law binds the soul over for disobedience to its precept, to its malediction and punishment, passeth a sentence of condemnation already upon the creature, and beginneth its execution in that bondage and fear, as flashes of the unquenchable fire, which seize on men in this life, Rom. vii. 6; John iii. 18; Heb. ii. 14. And as sin hath its strength from the law, the law making it so powerful to curse and condemn; so death has its strength and sting, its venom and virtue, to kill and damn, to destroy soul and

[1] Epiph., lib. i. cap. 33.

body for ever, from sin. Sin makes death so deadly, that it is the poison in the cup which makes it so mortal and loathsome a draught. Thy work and wisdom therefore is,—as the Philistines, when they heard that the great strength of Samson, the destroyer of their country, lay in his hair, were restless till they had cut it off, and he became weak;—so now thou hearest wherein the strength of death, the great destroyer and damner of souls, consisteth, to be unquiet night and day, to follow God up and down with sighs and sobs, strong cries, and deep groans for pardon of sin, and to give thyself no rest till thou attainest an interest in this covenant through Jesus Christ. Pious Job, though not in thy case, was for this cause exceeding importunate for a sense of this pardon: 'And why dost thou not pardon mine iniquity, and take away my transgressions? for now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, and I shall not be,' Job vii. 21. He crieth out, as one fallen into a deep dirty ditch, or one whose house is fired, Water, water for the Lord's sake, to cleanse this defiled soul, and to quench this scorched conscience; Lord, why doth the messenger, who useth to come post to me, a poor condemned prisoner, with a pardon, linger so long? Alas! I wish he may not come too late. But what is the reason of this importunity for expedition? Why, Job in his own thoughts was going to appear before his judge, and he durst not venture without a pardon in his hand; 'for now shall I sleep in the dust.' The child did not dare to go to bed at night till he had asked his father's blessing, and begged and obtained forgiveness of his disobedience in the day.

Nothing in the whole creation can pacify the conscience awakened with the guilt of sin, and frighted with the fear of death, but a pardon in the blood of this covenant; for want of this it was that the heathen were either desperate or doubtful in their deaths, and their orator ingeniously confesseth, that notwithstanding all the medicines they could gather out of their own gardens, the disease was still too strong for the remedy. But a plaster spread with the blood of Christ, and applied by faith to the sore, is a sovereign and certain cure. Faith in Christ is such a shield, that under its protection a Christian may stand in the evil day of death, keep his ground, and secure himself from all the shot which the law, Satan, or conscience can make against him: 'I am the resurrection and the life; he that liveth and believeth in me shall live, though he die,' John xi.

The death of the King of saints is the only comfort and help against death, the king of terrors. It is a strange property which

some report of the charadrion, that if any man have the jaundice, and look on the bird, and the bird on him, the bird catcheth the disease and dieth of it, but the man recovereth.[1] Christ took man's disease and died, that all who look on him with an eye of faith might recover and live. The red sea of his blood is the only way through which thou canst pass into Canaan. Reader, since there is a flood, and vengeance, and wrath upon the face of the world, fly, as the distressed dove, to this ark of the covenant; see how Jesus Christ, the true Noah, a preacher of righteousness, puts forth his hand to take thee in. He is the Son of David, to whom souls that are in debt and in distress may flee, and seemeth to speak to thee, as David to Abiathar, 'Abide thou with me, fear not: for they (the world and devil) that seek thy life, seek mine: but with me thou shalt be in safeguard,' 1 Sam. xxii. 23.

Secondly, There must of necessity be a change of thy nature by repentance, or death can never be thy passage into the undefiled inheritance. The new man is the only citizen of the new Jerusalem. It is bad venturing a voyage to the Happy Islands in an old leaking bottom. In the art of navigation it was a law, and formerly seriously observed, that none should be a master or master's mate, that had not been first a sculler, and rowed with oars, and from thence been promoted to the stern. None are fit to reign with God, who have not wrought for God; others are more unfit for it than a carter for a prince's court. Men must be bound apprentices on earth to that high and holy trade of worshipping and glorifying the blessed God, and know the art and mystery of it, (which the purblind eyes of nature cannot discern,) before they can set up for themselves, and enrich themselves by it in heaven. Men that are wholly strangers to a country, and no whit acquainted with the language and carriage of the natives, would find, if in it, but a solitary place. He whose eyes are so bad that he cannot see God with the help of the spectacles of ordinances, will be much more unable to see him face to face. Alas! what would an earthly man do in heaven?

Till thou art converted, and hast a sense of thy sins and miseries, thou art a rebel in actual arms against God; if death finds thee in such a condition, God takes the fort of thy soul by storm, with thy weapons in thy hands, and therefore thou canst expect nothing less than death eternal without mercy. There is no peace to be thought of with God, whilst thou maintainest war against him. The sinner, instead of disarming, armeth death against himself; the life of sin is the life of death, and enableth it to kill the soul. Till thy nature

[1] Willet. Hexapl. in Levit., c. xi.

be renewed, thy heart is full of enmity against God, and thy life nothing else but a walking contrary to him, and therefore thou canst have no delight or joy in him, which is the very heaven of heavens. There must be conformity to him, before there can be communion with him. God and man must be agreed before they can walk or dwell together: 'Except ye be converted, ye can in no wise enter into the kingdom of God;' and again, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,' Mat. xviii. 3; John iii. 3; which negatives, *can in no wise*, and *cannot* enter, speak not only the impossibility of it on God's part, because he is fully resolved against it; but also the incapacity on man's part, because he is wholly unprepared for it. Swine are not fit for a rubbed room, or a presence-chamber. As timber must be laid out and shrunk, before it is fit for building, otherwise it will warp; so God humbleth and draweth out self-sap and self-indisposition, before they become the temple of the Holy Ghost. That building which reacheth up to heaven must have a low foundation.

They that would turn pewter, by alchemy, into silver, first dissolve the pewter, or otherwise their labour is in vain. Thy heart must be melted by godly sorrow for sin, and hatred of sin, before thou canst be a vessel of silver for thy master's use. The angel troubled the waters before they were healing, John v. 4. 'Repent, that your sins may be blotted out,' Acts iii. 19. Repentance and remission are ever twins. It is observable that nature hath made the roots of many trees bitter, whose fruits are very sweet. They that in life sow in tears, at death shall reap in joy; it is the wet seed-time that hath the sunshiny harvest. God is resolved that all the sons of men shall feel sin, either in broken bones on earth, or broken backs in hell.

When sin hath its death wound before, it will expire at death; for though sin brought death into the body, death will cast sin out of the body. When grace is before budded and blossomed, at death it will ripen into glory. Holiness is the raiment of needle-work, in which thou art to be brought to thy Lord and husband, Ps. xlv. 14; but it is necessary that, like Abraham's ram, thou be perplexed in these briers, before by death thou art offered up as a peace-offering to God. They are foolish who dream of being carried to heaven in a feather bed. None but such as are weary of the work, (as a sick man of his bed,) and heavy laden with the weight, of sin, (as a porter can be of his burden), shall enter into the everlasting rest.

Naturalists observe that the Egyptian fig-tree being put into the water, presently sinketh to the bottom, but being well soaked, con-

trary to the nature of other trees, it buoys itself up to the top.[1] Till thy mind is enlightened, to see sin's deformity; thy will renewed, to refuse it as thy only enemy; and thy affections purified, to grieve for it, and loathe it, as it is contrary to the blessed God and thy own felicity; till thy soul is soaked in these bitter waters, never expect to be lifted up to the rivers of pleasures at God's right hand. This howling wilderness is the only way to Canaan. The path to Zion lieth by Sinai; God poureth the oil of gladness into the broken vessel. Some philosophers tell us that feeling is the foundation of natural life—no feeling, no life. It is true, I am sure in divinity, no feeling, no sense of sin, no spiritual, no eternal life; impenitency, like a lethargy, is deadly, is damning.

God doth qualify all whom he intendeth to dignify. Saul is qualified, by receiving another spirit than he had before, to reign over men; much more must they be qualified, by receiving a new heart and a new spirit, who are to reign with God. The sun never leaped from midnight to midday, but first sendeth forth some glimmerings of light, in the dawning of the day, then looketh upon us with some weak and waterish beams, after that beholds us with open face, and even then hath many miles to run before he can arrive at his meridian glory. God never carried a soul from hell to heaven, from a natural condition to the beatifical vision, but through the door or gate of conversion.

Reader, to conclude this use, and sum up these two particulars, which are more worth than the whole world, that thou mayest see how willing I am to be instrumental for thy welfare, I shall come up a little nearer and closer to thee. Oh that I did but know what savoury spiritual meat thou lovest most! if possible, I would provide it for thee, and set it before thee, that thou mightst eat, and thy soul might bless God before thou diest.

In order to thy eternal good, I have a special offer to make to thee from the blessed God, and that is of a marriage with his only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. I am this day sent to thee, as his ambassador, with full instructions to woo in his behalf, that I might present thee a chaste virgin unto Christ; thou needest not doubt of my authority, for in the Scriptures thou mayest read my commission and credential letters, which may give thee full security and satisfaction against all jealousies and suspicions which can possibly arise in thy breast. Thou needest not question God's reality in the tender of so great a fortune to thee, notwithstanding all thy unworthiness; for he sent his Son so great a journey, as from

[1] Pliny, Nat. Hist., lib. xiii. cap. 7.

heaven to earth, to marry thy nature, on purpose that he might be married to thy person; and hath caused him already to be at infinite cost in providing glorious attire, and precious jewels, out of heaven's wardrobe and cabinet, that thou mightst be adorned as is fit for the spouse of so great a Lord; nay, he himself hath sent thee his picture, of greater value than heaven and earth, drawn at length, and to the life, in the gospel, in all his royalty, beauty, and glory, to try if thou canst like and love his person. Friend, look wishly on him, consider his person; he is fairer than the children of men; he is the express image of his Father's person. Thy beloved (oh, shall I call him so!) is white and ruddy, the fairest of ten thousands, he is altogether lovely; nothing but amiableness; none ever saw him, but were enamoured with him. View his portion; he is heir of all things; all power is given to him in heaven and earth. I know thy poverty, but there are unsearchable riches in Christ, yea, durable riches and righteousness. Thou art infinitely in debt, and thereby liable to the arrest of divine justice, and eternal prison of hell; but I must tell thee, the revenues of this emperor are able to discharge the debts of millions of worlds, and to leave enough, too, for their comfortable and honourable subsistence to all eternity. Behold his parentage; he is the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth; the eternal Son of God. As there is incomparable beauty and favour in his person, and inestimable riches and treasure in his portion; so there is unconceivable dignity and honour in his parentage; for he is the only natural Son and heir of the most high God. For thy further quickening, he is thy near kinsman, bone of thy bone, and flesh of thy flesh, Gen. xxiv. 4, 5, and so hath right to thee. God hath given his stewards a command, as Abraham his servant, not to take a wife to his son of the daughters of the Canaanites, from among the evil angels, but to go to his Son's own country and kindred, and to take a wife for him among the children of men. Friend, thou hast heard the errand about which I am sent to thee. I hope there is such an arrow of love darted into thy heart from the gracious eyes and looks of this Lord of glory, that thou art wounded thereby, and beginnest of a sudden to be taken with him, and to wish, Oh that I might have the honour and happiness to become the bride of so lovely a bridegroom; that this king of saints would take me, a poor sinner, into his bed and bosom. Thou sayest, as Abigail when David sent to take her to wife, 'Behold, let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord; I am unworthy to be his spouse.' If it be thus with thee, I see

that thy affections are already entangled, and for thy comfort, know that he is not of the number of them, who, when they have gained others' good-will, then cast them off; only it will be needful that thou understand what he requires of thee, to avoid all future jars and differences. Plain dealing is never more necessary than in marriage; those that by daubing have huddled up matches in haste, have found cause enough to repent at leisure.

I shall propound two arguments for thy encouragement, and then demand thy agreement to two articles, upon which and no other this match can be concluded.

First, Consider the necessity of thy acceptance of Christ for thy husband. It is impossible to obtain heaven for thy jointure, but by marrying with him who is the heir. It may be, like him in Ruth, chap. iv. 2-4, whom the Spirit of God thought unworthy to be named, thou art ready for the band [1]—the portion—but unwilling to marry the person; thou art forward to be pardoned, adopted, and saved, but backward to take Jesus Christ for thy husband, lest thou shouldst lose thy sinful pleasures, and thereby mar, in thy opinion, a better inheritance. But know of a certain, as Boaz told him, what day thou buyest the field, thou must marry the owner of it; what day thou gainest the invaluable privileges of the gospel, thou must match with Christ, the purchaser and owner of them. There is no gaining the precious fruit, but by getting the tree that bears it. Indeed thy marriage with him is so fruitful a blessing, that thou needest no more. Forgiveness of sins, the love of God, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, eternal life, every good thing, all good things, are in the womb of it; thou canst not imagine what a numerous posterity of Barnabases—of sons of consolation—would be the effect and issue of such a wedding; but it is so needful a blessing, that without it thou art completely and eternally woeful. Beware, oh beware, how thou refusest so good an offer; for thou art in the same condition with the woman taken captive by the Jews, Deut. xxi., either to marry or die; either to match with Christ, or be damned for ever.

Secondly, Consider God's clemency and condescension, in tendering to thee so great a fortune. Kings on earth will not stoop so low, unless necessity force it, as to match their only sons with their subjects, though he and they are of the same make and mould; if they do, it is with the highest families, with such among them as sparkle most with the diamonds of birth, breeding, beauty, riches, and glory. But hear, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth! wonder, O reader, at this low stoop of the infinite God; he is willing,

[1] Qu. 'land'?—ED.

nay, earnest, that his only Son and heir, the King of kings, should marry with his creature—between whom and him there is an infinite distance and disproportion; nay, not with the noblest house among those creatures; not with angels, those heavenly courtiers, (he is their head, not their husband,) though by matching with them he had matched somewhat more like himself; but with sinful polluted dust and ashes. That our spiritual souls should be joined to our earthly bodies is much, yet here is some proportion—both are limited created beings; but that God should marry with man is infinitely more. It is said of the king of Babylon, that he lifted up the head of Jehoiachin out of prison, and spake kindly to him, and changed his prison garments, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him, 2 Kings xxv. 27–29. Man was a poor prisoner, bound and fettered with his own corruptions, kept up close by the devil, his jailer, and condemned to suffer the pains of eternal death; but, lo, the philanthropy and kindness of God! He sendeth his only Son to open the prison doors—having first satisfied the law, for the breach of which they were cast in, and removed its curse, which was as a padlock on the prison gate to keep it fast—set the poor captives at liberty, change their nasty prison weeds, and to exalt their nature above the nature of glorious angels, by marrying it to himself. Canst thou find in thy heart, friend, to abuse such matchless grace and favour? Is not that beggar mad that should refuse the real offers of a match from a gracious emperor? Shall majesty thus stoop to misery in vain? I must tell thee, it is infinite abasement in God thus to make suit to thee, but it is the highest preferment thou art capable of—nay, such as it had been blasphemy to have desired it, had not God offered it—to close with him.

I come now to the articles of this marriage, which truly are no more than thou requirest of thy own wife (if thou hast any,) and therefore thou canst not but think them reasonable. I shall propound them to thee in these two questions.

First, Art thou heartily willing to take Jesus Christ for thy Saviour and Sovereign? Canst thou love him with the hottest superlative love as thy husband? It is one thing to love a man as a friend, and another thing to love him as thy husband. Canst thou give him the keys of thy heart, and keep thy affections as a fountain sealed up from others, and opened only for him, and in subordination to him? Wilt thou honour him with the highest honour as thy Lord, submitting to his Spirit as thy guide, and to his laws as thy rule? Is thy soul so ravished with the beauty of his person, the excellency of his promises, and the equity of his precepts, that

thou darest promise, through his strength, to be a loving, faithful, and obedient wife? Have the hot beams of that love, which have been darted forth from this Sun of righteousness, as the rays of the sun united in a glass, turned thee into a flame, that thy heart is now ascending and mounting to heaven where thy beloved is, and thou canst no more live without him, than thy body without thy soul? Art thou willing to be sanctified by his Spirit, that thou mightst be prepared for his bosom and embraces, and to be saved alone by his merits, as the only procuring cause of all thy hopes and happiness? Wilt thou take him for better and for worse, for richer and for poorer; with his cup of affliction, as well as his cup of consolation; with his shameful cross, as well as his glorious crown; choosing rather to suffer with him, than to reign without him; to die for him, than to live from him? Such as marry, thou knowest, must expect trouble in the flesh. Christianity, like the wind *Cœcias*, doth ever draw clouds and afflictions after it, but thy future glory and pleasure will abundantly recompense thee for thy present pain and ignominy.

Secondly, Wilt thou presently give a bill of divorce to all other lovers, and keep the bed of thy heart wholly for him? Shall the evil of sin never more have a good look from thee; but, as Amnon served Tamar, shall the hatred wherewith thou hatest those filthy strumpets—with whom thou hast had cursed dalliances, and committed spiritual fornication—be greater than the love wherewith thou hast loved them? Canst thou pack away the bondwoman and her son, and these things not at all be grievous in thy sight; that thy whole joy and delight may be in, and all that thou art worth preserved for, the true Isaac? Shall this Sun reign alone in the heavens of thy heart without any competitor? As when a dictator was created at Rome, there was a *supersedeas* to all other authority; so if Christ be exalted in thy soul, there must be a cessation of all other rule and power. Christ will not be a king merely in derision, as the Jews made him; nor as the stump of wood was to the frogs in the fable, whom every lust may securely dance about and provoke.

These are the terms upon which this match, so honourable and profitable, is offered to thee. Give up a hearty *yea* to these two equitable articles, and thou art made for ever; refuse it, and thou art miserable above all apprehensions, and beyond millions of ages, even to all eternity. What sayest thou to it? Shall I put the same question to thee which they put to Rebekah: Wilt thou go with this man? In thy denial there is no less than eternal death.

Methinks the thoughts of that fire and brimstone should force thee to fly to this Zoar. In thy unfeigned hearty acceptance there is no less than heaven and eternal life. What wouldst thou not do to continue natural life? What then shouldst thou not do or suffer for eternal life? It may be thou desirest time to consider of it; as Rebekah's mother, thou art willing to the match, but wouldst not have it yet concluded. Augustine bewails it in himself, that when God was drawing him to Christ, his carnal pleasures represented themselves before his eyes, saying, What! wilt thou leave us for ever, and shall we be no more with thee for ever? And then he threw himself down, and weeping, cried out, O Lord, how long, how long shall I say to-morrow? why not to-day, Lord? why not to-day? Why should there not be an end of my sinful life this hour? But believe it, delays are dangerous, especially in works of such weight.

If thou answerest, as Rebekah did, I will go; cheer up, poor soul. Whatever thy course or carriage hath been, thy husband is able and willing to pay all thy scores, were they a million for a mite; and come forth, behold thy beloved in his embroidery and glory; see how his arms are stretched out to embrace thee; his lips are ready to kiss thee; oh what a look of love he giveth thee. Sure I am thou art more in his heart than in thine own. Little dost thou think what rings and robes, what dainties and delicates, what grace, and mercy, and peace he provided on purpose against the return of thee, a wandering prodigal. Thou needest now no longer run a score with the world for any of its coarse, carnal fare; thy beloved will entertain thee at his own table with curious and costly feasts; thou shalt have bread to eat which the world knows not of. If dangers and evils pursue thee, thou hast thy city of refuge at hand, wherein thou mayest be secure from the fear and fury of men and devils.

It will be life to thee now to think of death; thou mayest lift up thy head with joy when that day of thy redemption draweth nigh. Death will give thee a writ of ease both from sin and sorrow; then thy indentures will expire, and thy soul be at liberty. Thou hast now taken in thy full lading for heaven, and mayest therefore call, like a merchant that hath all his goods on shipboard, to the master of the vessel, to hoist up sail, and be gone towards thy everlasting harbour. Oh how may thy heart revive, with old Jacob's, to see those waggons which are sent to fetch thee to thy dear Jesus, for thou knowest that he is lord of the country, and able to make thee welcome when thou comest thither. Now thou art present in the

body, and so absent from the Lord; but then thou shalt ever ever be with the Lord. But if thou refusest so great and so good an offer, choosing slavery to the flesh before this Christian liberty, and resolving, as many wicked ones do, rather to be free for many harlots than to take one wife, rather to love and serve divers lusts and pleasures than to be wedded to Jesus Christ, go on, take thy course, but be confident that thy fleshly life, like the head of Polypus, though pleasant at present, will afterwards cause troublesome sleep and frightful dreams. If thou intendest to launch into the ocean of eternity without this pilot, the blessed Saviour, who alone can steer the vessel of thy soul amidst those dangerous shelves and sands aright, and the ballast of grace, not regarding what passage thou hast, nor at what port thou arrivest in the other world, whether heaven or hell, prepare thyself to take up thine eternal lodging amongst frightful devils, and to bear thy part in the endless yellings and howlings of the damned; and know withal to thy terror that this very tender of grace will one day, like Joab's sword to Abner, stab thee under the fifth rib, cut thee to the very heart, and, like a mountain of lead, sink thee deep into that ocean of wrath, when thou shalt have time enough to befool thyself for refusing so good an offer, and where thou shalt be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

'I have this day set before thee life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days,' Deut. xxx. 19, 20.

CHAPTER VIII.

The second exhortation to the serious Christian, shewing how a saint may come to die with courage.

I shall now speak in this use of exhortation to the serious Christian.

If thy flesh will fail thee so, fortify thy spirit, that thou mayest give the flesh a cheerful farewell. Thy care must be to die with courage. A good soldier, in all his armour, may be daunted at the sight of that enemy whom he meeteth on a sudden. Mary was troubled at the sight and sayings of that angel which brought the

best news that ever the world heard, Luke i. It is true thou canst never die before thou art ripe for heaven, but thou mayest die, in some sense, before thou art ready, in thy own apprehensions, to leave the earth. Many go to heaven certainly, who go not to heaven comfortably.

It was Tertullian's character of the Christians in his time, that they were *Expeditum morti genus*, A sort of people prepared for death. When a son hath loitered in the day, he may well be afraid to look his father in the face at night; but when he hath laboured faithfully, he may come into his presence without fear.[1]

Though he that is sober at home be more ready to put off his clothes and go to sleep, than he that is drinking and vomiting in a tavern, yet even this man may think of some business which he neglected, in the day-time, that may make him unwilling to lie down. Surely somewhat is the cause that the children of God are so unquiet when night cometh, and so many of them go wrangling to bed.

Christian, I would in a few words direct thee how thou mayest put off thy earthly tabernacle as cheerfully as thy clothes, and lie down in thy grave as comfortably as ever thou didst in a bed of down. It is thy own fault, if thou dost not keep such a good fire all day—I mean grace so flaming on the hearth of thy heart—that thou mayest increase it at night, and so go warm to bed, even to thy eternal rest.

The first means.

Take heed of blotting thy evidences for heaven. Darkness, we know, is very dreadful; when men, by great or wilful sins, have so blurred the deeds which speak their right to heaven, that they cannot read them, no wonder if, being thus in the dark, they are afraid to leave the earth.

It is reported of good Agathon,[2] that when death approached, he was much troubled; whereupon his friends said unto him, What dost thou fear? He answered, I have endeavoured to keep the commandments of God; but I am a man, and how do I know whether my works please God or no? for other is the judgment of God, and other is the judgment of men. He must needs be troubled to be removed from present pleasures, who knoweth not that he shall go to a better place. Twenty pounds a-year certain is counted better than—and a man will be unwilling to part

[1] Tertul. de Spectac., cap. i. [2] Doroth., doct. 2.

with it for—forty pounds a-year that is doubtful. It is assurance only of a better life which will carry the soul with comfort through the bitter pangs of death. Hence it was that Job called so frequently, and cried so earnestly, to be laid to bed: 'Oh that I might have my request; that God would grant me the thing that I long for! even that it would please God to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off! then should I yet have comfort. Let him not spare; for I have not concealed the words of the Holy One,' Job vi. 8–10. Job had lived with a good conscience, and therefore feared not to die with great comfort. His fidelity to God encouraged him to expect mercy from God. He had not concealed nor shut up God's faithfulness from men, and therefore knew that God would not conceal his loving-kindness from him. But David, on the other hand, when night, in his own thoughts, drew near, was as importunate to sit up longer. God seemed to call him to bed, but he begs hard, 'O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more,' Ps. xxxix. 13.

Now mark the reason of this petition. David, as it is generally conceived, was now persecuted by Absalom. The unnatural son forced his father to fly. He in his suffering reads his own sin, and God's indignation, and so dreads an appearance in the other world in such a condition. He who, when things were clear betwixt God and his soul, could walk in the valley of the shadow of death and fear none ill, could even give death a challenge, now, when things are cloudy and dubious, runs back like a coward. He had lost the sense of God's favour, and therefore could not think of venturing into his presence without much fear. The train of his corruptions threatened to wait on him to the highest court, and he durst not appear before the Lord with such company. He had been declining in his grace under a sad distemper, and, as a weak, consumptionate man, he was afraid to travel so great a journey, as the way whence he should never return. The tenant who wants his rent, loves not to hear of the quarter-day.

Friend, if thou wouldst leave the world cheerfully, live in the world conscientiously; take heed of those fiends which will fright thee in the night of death; choose suffering before sin, and punish thy body to keep thy soul pure. The ermine, some say, will die before she will go into the dirt to defile her beautiful skin; and the mouse of Armenia will rather be taken and slain, than preserve and pollute herself in a filthy hole. As the white is always in the archer's eye, so let thy death be in thine, that it may quicken thee to diligence and exactness in thy life.

Logicians who regard not the premises, infer wild conclusions; so if thou art careless of thy conversation, expect but an uncomfortable dissolution. As when God looked on all his works, and saw that they were good, then followed his Sabbath of rest; so when thou canst reflect upon the several passages of thy life, and see that through Christ they are good, and thou hast not been guilty of enormities, though of infirmities, after this thou wilt joyfully by death enter into thy everlasting Sabbath. Thy evidence will be clear, if thy conscience be kept clean; but the truth is, many, even amongst Christians, wound their souls by venturing on sin, and then flinch and start back when they come to be searched; besides, they neglect casting up their accounts so long, that they know not whether they are worth anything or nothing, and so may well be unwilling to have their estates ransacked into.

If thou shouldst fall, (I would not sad any saint,) take heed of lying there; but be as speedy as is possible in calling to Christ to raise thee up. If thy conscience be raw with the guilt of any sin, a light affliction (much more death) will make thee kick and fling, and unwilling to bear it. But when thy flesh is sound, (thy spirit healed by the blood of Christ,) death itself will be but a light burden on thy back. How merrily mayest thou, though thou hast not a penny in thine own purse, go the way of all the earth, travel into the other world, when thou art sure of Christ in thy company, who will bear thy charges all the way.

The second means.

Secondly, Mortify thy affections more to the world and all its comforts. They who love the world most, leave it worst. Lot's wife lingered in Sodom so much, and was so loath to depart, because she loved it overmuch. When boards lie close one upon another they are easily parted, but when they are glued one to another it will cost some trouble and pains. If thy heart be loose to the world, it will be a small matter to thee to leave it, but if thou art fastened to it in thy affections, it will not be done without much reluctancy and opposition.

The wife who hath been so faithful to her husband as to keep her heart wholly for him, is ready always to open the door to him; when she that entertaineth other lovers, though her husband knock at the door, dares not run presently to open it, but first makes a shuffling and bustling up and down to hide, or get them out of the way. The more thy affections are set on Christ, thy true husband,

the more the world is taken out of thee; and so the more easily wilt thou be taken out of the world. He who hath laid up his heart in heaven will comfortably think of laying down his head in the earth. When the pins of the watch are taken out, which held it together, how easily doth it fall in pieces! When thy affections from these things below are removed, how quickly, how quietly will thy soul and body fall asunder! If the world be as loose to thee as thy cloak, thou canst put it off at pleasure; but if it be as close to thee as thy skin, they shall have somewhat to do who shall persuade thee to part with it. We read of some who were unwilling to die, for they had treasure in the field, Jer. xli. 8. Where their treasure was, their hearts were also.

Make it thy work, therefore, by considering the world's vanity and deceitfulness, and by pondering heaven's glory and happiness, to wean thy heart from sublunary things; hereby thou wilt as willingly leave them as ever infant did those breasts which long ago it was weaned from.

The third means.

Use thy heart to the frequent thoughts of death. When children are frightened at a dog or a cat, we do not give way to their foolish fears, but bring the brute to them, and get them to touch and handle it, and shew them that it is not such a frightful thing as they imagine; and hereby in time they are so far from being frighted, that they can play with it familiarly. Dost thou dread this king of terrors, death? give not way to this fear, but bring death up to thy spirit, handle it, feel it, there is no such hurt in it as thou imaginest, nothing which should terrify thee; hereby at last thou mayest come to play upon the hole of this asp.

One ground I suppose why Job made no more of dying, was because he was so well acquainted with death. Strangers are startled at many things in a place, which they that are home-born and used to can delight in. 'I have said to corruption, Thou art my father; and to the worms, Thou art my brother and sister,' Job xvii. 14. Job was as familiar with death, as if it had been his father; and made no more of dying, than of falling into the arms and embraces of his mother or sister. Moses at first started back at the sight of the serpent; but when he had handled it a little, it was turned into a rod, and nothing frightful to him.

There is a story of an ass, called Cumanus ass, which, jetting up and down in a lion's skin, did for a time much terrify his master,

but afterwards, being descried, did much benefit him. Thou art fearful possibly, reader, of this beast, supposing it to be a roaring lion; but come up to it, and thou wilt find it but an ass in the skin of a lion, and such a one as will be no way hurtful, but many ways helpful to thee. What is this bugbear death which thus frights thee? Is it not the paranymphus, which presenteth thy faithful soul to thy beloved husband? Is it not a leaving the world, and a going to thy Father? Is it less than a kiss of God's lips? The indulgent parent will take the babe into her arms, and with many kisses lay it in her lap, when it is falling asleep.

The Chaldee paraphrase tell us, Moses died with a kiss of the Lord's mouth, Deut. xxxiv. 5. Will it not be the funeral of all thy corruptions and crosses, and the resurrection of all imaginable delights and comforts? Didst thou but know this, friend, more, thou wouldst not be so shy of its company.

The Roman used their youth to gladiatory fights, and bloody spectacles, that acquaintance with them beforehand might make them less troubled in wars with their enemies. Philostrates lived seven years in his tomb before his death, that his bones might be the better known to his grave. Accustom thyself to the thoughts of death, thy change, thy translation to bliss, thy entrance into heaven, and when it comes, his errand being known so well before, he will be welcome.

Mithridates, by accustoming his body to poison, turned it into good nourishment; use thy soul to the thoughts of death, and though it be worse than poison to others, it will be pleasant and profitable to thee.

END OF VOL. III.

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